

JADAVPUR JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

22

Robert Antoine S.J.	The Technique of Oral Composition in the <i>Rāmāyaṇa</i>	1
Henry H.H. Remak	An Undergraduate Survey of the Discipline of Comparative Literature in America : Problems and Opportunities	22
E. San Juan, Jr.	The Poetics of the Metropolis in Philippine Literature	34
Sisir Kumar Das	Terms for the Medieval Indian Long Verse Forms	59
V. Sachithanandan P. Marudanayagam	Comparative Literature Studies Tamil Nadu : Conceptions and Misconceptions	78
R.K. Kaul	Arthur Miller as a Critic of Ibsen	83
K. Chellappan Rani Rema Devi	The Mother Image : A Comparative Study of Clytemnestra, Medea and Kannaki	94
Harish Trivedi	The Urdu Premchand : the Hindi Premchand	104
Shirshendu Chakrabarti	Against the Pride of Reason : Looking at Swift through Montaigne	112
Swapan Majumdar	The Periodization of Indian Literature : A Probe into the Problems of Literary History	134
Book Reviews		144
JJCL Notes		155

1984

Editor
Amiya Dev

DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
CALCUTTA

ISSN 0448-1143

Founded by
Buddhadeva Bose

Former Editors
1961-63 : Buddhadeva Bose
1964-81 : Naresh Guha

Editorial Board
Manabendra Bandyopadhyay Amiya Dev
Swapn Majumdar Subir Ray Choudhuri

Price : Rs 15.00 / \$ 3.50

Published by Arunkumar Gupta, Registrar,
Jadavpur University, and printed by Suresh
Dutta at Modern Printers, 12 Ultadanga
Main Road, Calcutta 700 067.

THE TECHNIQUE OF ORAL COMPOSITION IN THE *RĀMĀYAṆA**

Robert Antoine S.J.

5

In the examples quoted in Chapters 3 and 4 one cannot fail to notice the frequent recurrences of compounds beginning with *mahā*. In fact, these four-syllable compounds constitute the richest source of traditional formulae. They are mostly possessive compounds (*bahuvrīhi*), although descriptive determinatives (*karmadhāraya*) do occur occasionally. These *mahā*-compounds may at times appear in the first half of a *pāda*, but, in the majority of cases, they stand in the second half and their metrical pattern rigidly determines their place in the *śloka*. Those with the metrical pattern v – – – are strictly reserved for the end of a and c ; those with the metrical pattern v – v –, for the end of b and d. They are not interchangeable, but, in many cases, we find doublets equivalent in meaning though different in metrical pattern. This, of course, enables the bard to express himself with ease and freedom. Here are a few examples of such doublets :

<i>a and c</i>					<i>b and d</i>				
v	–	–	–		v	–	v	–	
ma	hā	ve	ga	–	ma	hā	ja	va	
ma	hā	te	jas	–	ma	hā	dyu	ti	
ma	hā	vṛ	kṣa	–	ma	hā	dru	ma	
ma	hā	nā	da	–	ma	hā	sva	na	
ma	hā	bā	hu	–	ma	hā	bhu	ja	
ma	hā	bud	dhi	–	ma	hā	ma	ti	
ma	hā	ra	ṇya	–	ma	hā	va	na	
ma	hā	sat	tva	–	ma	hā	ba	la	

* These are Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 of the late Father Antoine's unfinished book *The Technique of Oral Composition in the Rāmāyaṇa*—a follow-up of what was printed in the last number.

The bard's fondness for those *mahā*- compounds is undeniable, for they are ideal verse-fillers, as for instance in the following :

etāvad uktvā vacanam Viśvāmitro *mahātapāḥ* /
virarāma *mahātejā* ṛṣimadhye *mahāmuniḥ* // 1.58.23

We shall attempt here a tabulation of the most important of these *mahā*- compounds, dividing them into two categories according to their metrical pattern. Throughout the whole *Rāmāyaṇa* one will not find a single exception to the rule governing the use of those formulaic compounds : it is their metrical pattern which allots them their place in the *śloka*.

a. *mahā*- compounds with the metrical pattern v – – –

These four-syllable compounds are fit for the second half of *pādas* a and c and are never found at the end of b or d.

1. *mahātejas* occurs at least 266 times at the end of a or c. It can be used only in the nominative and vocative singular, the other cases having five syllables. It is often preceded by a proper name of four syllables or one of three syllables with the enclitic *tu*, *'pi* or *ca*. Besides, as we have already seen, it is also used after *evamuktvā*, *pratyuvāca*, etc. The vocative singular occurs only 12 times. Here are a few examples:

Viśvāmitro	<i>mahātejāḥ</i>	(7)
Ṛṣyaśṛṅgo	„	(1)
Satānando	„	(1)
Kumbhakarno	„	(3)
Daśagrīvo	„	(1)
Rāvaṇo'pi	„	(3)
Gautamo'pi	„	(1)
Janako'pi	„	(1)
Dilīpas tu	„	(1)
Rāghavas tu	„	(1)
Nāradas tu	„	(2)
Lakṣmaṇaśca	„	(3)
Sugrīvaśca	„	(2)
evam ukto	„	(7)
evam uktvā	„	(12)
tam (tām) uvāca	„	(10)
pratyuvāca	„	(6)

2. *mahābāhu* occurs at least 203 times at the end of a or c, 96 times in the nominative singular (*mahābāhuḥ*), 88 times in the vocative singular (*mahābāho*), 16 times in the accusative singular (*mahābāhum*) and 3 times in the ablative or genitive singular (*mahābāhoḥ*). Unlike *mahātejas* it is rarely preceded by a proper noun. Here are a few examples :

evam uktvā	mahābāhuḥ	(4)
vilalāpa	„	(2)
virarāja	„	(1)
praviveśa	„	(2)
āruroha	„	(1)
pratyuvāca	„	(1)
„	mahābāhum	(1)
paśya Rāmaṃ	„	(1)
simhoraskam	„	(2)
abhigamya	„	(1)
hā Lakṣmaṇa	mahābāho	(2)
sukhī bhava	„	(2)
svāgataṃ te	„	(1)

3. *mahārāja* occurs at least 57 times at the end of a or c : nominative singular (*mahārājaḥ*) : 18 ; vocative singular (*mahārāja*) : 26 ; accusative singular (*mahārājam*) : 10 ; locative singular (*mahārāja*) : 3.

4. As the second half of a or c, with the metrical pattern v – – –, the following *mahā*- compounds occur regularly:

<i>mahābhāga</i>	(75)	<i>mahānāda</i>	(29)
<i>mahāvīrya</i>	(67)	<i>mahāsattva</i>	(16)
<i>mahārāja</i>	(57)	<i>mahāghora</i>	(16)
<i>mahāvega</i>	(45)	<i>mahādeva</i>	(10)
<i>mahāprājña</i>	(43)	<i>maheśvāsa</i>	(9)
<i>mahākāya</i>	(42)	<i>mahābuddhi</i>	(3)

- b. *mahā*- compounds with the metrical pattern v – v –

These four-syllable compounds are fit for the second half of *pādas* b and d and are never found at the end of a or c.

1. *mahābala* occurs at least 330 times at the end of b or d. It is

used in the nominative and accusative singular, dual and plural and in the instrumental plural, as well as in the vocative singular, i.e. in cases which have four syllables. In the *Yuddha-kāṇḍa* alone it is found 126 times.

2. *mahāmuni* is found at least 84 times at the end of b or d, out of which 52 are in the *Bālakāṇḍa*, mostly as qualifying

Viśvāmitra :	Viśvāmitro	mahāmuniḥ	(22)
	Viśvāmitram	mahāmunim	(8)

At times the first half of the *pāda* is made of a four-syllable perfect :

virarāma	<i>mahāmuniḥ</i>	(1)
vyājahāra	„	(2)
niṣasāda	„	(1)
āsasāda	„	(1)
pratyuvāca	<i>mahāmunim</i>	(2)

mahāmuni is used in the nominative, vocative, accusative, genitive and locative singular, the other cases with their five syllables being unsuitable.

3. *mahāyaśas* occurs at least 100 times at the end of b or d. It can be used only in the nominative and vocative singular. It is at times preceded by a four-syllable perfect :

ājagāma	mahāyaśaḥ	(1)
niṣasāda	„	(1)
ājuhāva	„	(1)
praviveśa	„	(2)

In the vocative singular it is mostly used with *rājaputra*

rājaputra	mahāyaśaḥ	(8)
-----------	-----------	-----

4. At the end of b or d, the following *mahā-* compounds with the metrical pattern v – v – appear regularly :

<i>mahākapt</i>	(76)	<i>mahāvana</i>	(19)
<i>mahāsvana</i>	(33)	<i>mahājva</i>	(14)
<i>mahādyuti</i>	(33)	<i>mahāmati</i>	(14)
<i>mahārutha</i>	(30)	<i>mahābhujā</i>	(7)
<i>mahatapaḥ</i>	(22)		

6

Although the *mahā*- compounds greatly facilitate the task of the bard, they remain limited in their scope. As has been pointed out in Chapter 5, they cannot be used in all cases. Hence, in those cases where the *mahā*- compounds fail to fulfil the metrical requirements for the end of a *pāda*, other words are needed to form metrically suitable epithets. Such words will be nominal stems ending with a consonant and having a long penultimate. They can be listed as follows :

- a. *dhīmat*
- b. *tejas*, *cetas* and *ośas*
- c. adjectives ending in *-in*
- d. compounds with *ātman* as their last member

a. *dhīmat*

At the end of b and d *dhīmat* is used in the instrumental, dative and genitive singular : *dhīmatā*, *dhīmate*, *dhīmataḥ* (- v -), provided the previous word ends with a short syllable in order to conform with the metrical pattern of the second half of b and d : v - v - . Thus in the *Bālakāṇḍa* we have :

Viśvāmitreṇa	dhīmatā	(1)
Viśvāmitrāya	dhīmate	(2)
Viśvāmitrasya	dhīmataḥ	(5)

In the whole *Rāmāyaṇa*, *dhīmat* in one of the three mentioned cases occurs at least 80 times. A few examples :

sajjo	Rāmasya	dhīmataḥ	(1)
mātā	„	„	(1)
tasya	„	„	(1)
bhāryā	„	„	(1)
dūto	„	„	(1)
tatra	„	„	(1)
tadā	„	„	(1)
dr̥ṣṭvā	„	„	(2)
patni	„	„	(1)
paśya	„	„	(1)
bhrātā	„	„	(1)

The break-up is as follows :

dhimatā : 21 ; *dhimate* : 4 ; *dhimataḥ* : 55

b. tejas, cetas, ojas

1. *tejas* either by itself or as the final member of a compound occurs at least 120 times at the end of b or d in the following cases : nominative and accusative plural and genitive singular (*tejasaḥ*), instrumental singular (*tejasā*), genitive plural (*tejasām*), and accusative singular (*tejasam*), all of which have the metrical pattern – v – . The preceding word always ends in a short syllable.

In the structure 4 + 4 we have the end of b or d formed by *svatejasā* :

1	dīpyamānaṃ	svatejasā	(6)
	dīpyamānau	„	(1)
	dīpyamānāṃ	„	(2)
	upapannaṃ	„	(1)
	mahāvīryān	„	(1)

In the structure 3 + 5 we have :

jvalantam svena	tejasā	(1)
jvalantyaḥ „	„	(1)
rakṣitā „	„	(1)
rakṣitām „	„	(2)
Rāghavaḥ „	„	(1) etc.
Lakṣmaṇaṃ	dīptatejasam	(4)
bhrātaraṃ	„	(3)
Rāvaṇaṃ	„	(1)
madhyāhne	„	(1)
muninā	dīptatejasā	(1)
munīnām	dīptatejasām	(1)
kupīnām	„	(1)
surveṣām	„	(1)
munīnām	ugratejasām	(1)
rakṣasām	„	(1)
ballīnām	„	(1) etc.

In the structure 2 + 6 we have :

putreṇāmitatejasā	(1)
Rameṇāmitatejasā	(2)
mahatsvamitatejasah	(2)
patnyām amitatejasah	(1)
bhāryām „	(5)
munim jvalitatejasam	(2)
ṛṣim „	(1)
Rāmaṃ „	(1)

Finally there are a few formulae covering the whole *pāda* :

jvalantam	iva	tejasā	(6)
jvalantim	„	„	(2)
pradīpta	„	„	(2)
pradīptam	„	„	(2)
prajvalann	„	„	(6)
didhakṣann	„	„	(1)
hlādayann	„	„	(1)
dīptāgni-samatejasah			(1)
„ -samatejasam			(1)
mahaṛṣi-samatejasah			(1)
brahmaṛṣi-samatejasam			(1)
hutāśa-samatejasah			(1)
vāyvindra-samatejasau			(2)

2. *cetas* at the end of b or d occurs at least 43 times, but never in the nominative singular.

Structure 3 + 5 :

Sugrivaṃ	gatacetasam	(1)
mātaraṃ	„	(1)
daivena	gatacetasau	(1)
sarveṣāṃ	dīnacetasām	(1)
Aṅgadaṃ	dīnacetasam	(1)
Virādhavaṃ	pāpacetasam	(1)
mārgena	klāntacetasah	(1) etc.

Structure 2 + 6 :

tasmin	vibatacetasi	(1)
śrāntā	vigatacetasah	(1)
putrau	vigatacetasau	(1) etc.

Formula covering the whole *pāda* :

bāṣṭopahatacetasah	(1)
śokopahatacetasah	(1)
śokopahatacetasam	(1)
vyathitākulacetasam	(1)
paramākulacetasam	(1)
paribhrāmitacetasah	(1)
nidrāpahṛtacetasah	(1)

For the nominative singular masculine and feminine *cetas* has two substitutes, *cetana* and *mānasa*. Both are used as the last members of compounds at the end of b or d. They are also used in the accusative singular and nominative plural. *cetana* occurs 50 times and *mānasa* 36 times.

Examples :

vepamāna	vicetanā	(1)
vilapantaṃ	vicetanam	(1)
babhūva	gatacetanah	(1)
rājānaṃ	gatacetanam	(1)
Lakṣmaṇe	dīnacetanah	(5)
sūtaṃ taṃ	dinamānasah	(1)
Bharataṃ	dinamānasam	(1)
niṣedur	dinamānasāḥ	(1)
rājā	vigatacetanah	(1)
rājā	vibhrāntacetanah	(1)
Tāraḥ sambhrāntamānasah		(1)
bhrāntākulitacetanah		(1)
śokopahatacetanah		(1)
śokopahatacetanā		(3)
śokopahatacetanām		(1)
śokasantaptamānasah		(1)

3. *ojas* mostly at the end of a compound appears at least 58 times at the end of b or d, but never in the nominative singular. Structure 4 + 4 :

kulajānām	mahaujasām	(1)
muhāsyānām	„	(1)
plṣṭitānām	„	(1)
vānarāṇām	„	(5)

rākṣasānām	„	(1)
rākṣasasya	mahaujasaḥ	(1)
pārthivāśca	„	(1)
Rāmadūtā	„	(1)
bhrājamānam	mahaujasam	(1)
guṇavantam	„	(1)
yasmai Brahmā	mahaujase	(1)

Structure 3 + 5 :

niṣedur	amitaujasaḥ	(1)
sameyur	„	(1)
mamanthur	„	(1)
tasyāham	„	(1)
Māruter	„	(1)
mahaṣer	„	(1)
garjantam	amitaujasam	(1)
Mahendram	„	(1)
Vasiṣṭham	peramaujasam	(1) etc.

c. Adjectives ending in -in

These adjectives, too, provide at the end of b or d grammatical forms in all the cases of the masculine and feminine, *except* in the nominative singular masculine.

1. *yaśasvin*, *tapasvin*, *tarasvin*, *manasvin*

These four adjectives in the cases mentioned above offer the structure 4 + 4. Their rate of recurrence is as follows :

yaśasvin : 75 ; *tapasvin* : 57 ; *tarasvin* : 22 ; *manasvin* : 18.

A few examples :

rājaputram	yaśasvinam	(2)
Bharatam ca	„	(1)
rājaputri	yaśasvini	(2)
Kausalyā ca	„	(1)
Rāmapatnīm	yaśasvinīm	(2)
hā Vaidehi	tapasvini	(1)
tāpasānām	tapasvinām	(1)
vepamānā	tapasvini	(3)
brāhmaṇeṣu	tapasviṇu	(1)

kuñjarāṇām	tarasvinām	(2)
vānarāṇām	„	(6)
sthirā bhava	manasvini	(1)
vānarāśca	manasvinaḥ	(1)

2. A great number of other adjectives in *-in* with a long penultimate are used at the end of compounds for the second half of b and d in both masculine and feminine but never in the nominative masculine singular. Such are : *kārin*, *gāmin*, *cārin*, *darśin*, *dhārīn*, *rūptin*, *vādin* and *vāsin*. Examples are given of the last three. *rūptin* occurs over 70 times at the end of b or d, the most frequent form being *kāmarūptin* in the structure 3 + 5.

× × × kāma-rūpiṇam	(6)	× × × kāma-rūpiṇau	(2)
× × × „ -rūpiṇaḥ	(19)	× × × „ -rūpiṇā	(7)
× × × „ -rūpiḥ	(8)	× × × „ -rūpiṇām	(6)
× × × „ -rūpiṇī	(8)		

vādin occurs over 37 times at the end of b or d, the most frequent forms being *satyavādin* and *priyavādin* in the structure 3 + 5 :

× × × satyavādinam	(7)	× × × satyavādinaḥ	(3)
× × × satyavādinā	(2)	× × × satyavādinām	(1)
× × × satyavādini	(1)	× × × priyavādinam	(9)
× × × priyavādinaḥ	(2)	× × × priyavādibhiḥ	(2)
× × × priyavādini	(2)		

vāsin occurs over 78 times at the end of b or d and fits in several structures. For example :

Structure 3 + 5 :

× × × puravāsināḥ	(9)
× × × puravāsinām	(2)
× × × puravāsibhiḥ	(1)
× × × vanavāsināḥ	(7)
× × × vanavāsinam	(3)

Structure 2 + 6 :

× × viṣayavāsināḥ	(5)
× × viṣayavāsinām	(1)
× × viṣayavāsini	(1)
× × āśramavāsināḥ	(2)
× × āśramavāsinīm	(1)
× × Laṅkānivāsināḥ	(1)

Structure 1 + 7 :

× āśramanivāsinaḥ	(2)
× āśramanivāsinam	(2)

Full *pāda* :

Daṇḍakāraṇya-vāsinaḥ	(2)
„ -vāsinām	(3)
„ -vāsibhiḥ	(1)
pātālatala -vāsinaḥ	(1)
„ -vāsinām	(1)
„ -vāsibhiḥ	(1)
vasudhātala -vāsinaḥ	(1)
nānādeśa -nivāsinām	(1)

d. Compounds ending in -ātman

These compounds are divided into two categories :

1. Those with the metrical pattern – – – . They are used at the end of a or c, exclusively in the nominative singular with a few instances of the vocative singular. Such are : *dharmātman*, *duṣṭātman*, *prītātman*, *dinātman*, *parītātman*, etc. We shall analyze the first two.
2. Those ending with the metrical pattern v – v. They are *never* used in the nominative or vocative singular at the end of a *pāda*. In the other strong cases (nominative dual and plural and accusative singular and dual) they fall naturally at the end of a or c : *mahātmanau*, *mahātmānaḥ*, *mahātmānam*, with the metrical pattern v – – – . In the weak cases their metrical pattern is that of the end of b and d, *mahātmanah*, *mahātmanā*, *mahātmane*, etc.

i. First group : *dharmātman* and *duṣṭātman*

dharmātman occurs at least 145 times at the end of a or c, mostly in the nominative singular *dharmātmā* (and only a few times in the vocative singular *dharmātman*). The structure is 5+5 and there is a great variety in the first part of the *pāda*. Examples :

Vīśvāmitras tu	dharmātmā	(2)
Vīśvamitro'pi	„	(3)
Vibhīṣaṇas	„*	(4)

kathayāmāsa	dharmātmā	(2)
janayāmāsa	„	(2)
evam uktas tu	„	(5)
evam uktaḥ sa	„	(1)
evam uktvā tu	„	(1)
ityevam ukto	„	(1)

In the vocative singular *dharmātman* is usually replaced by *dharmajña*. *duṣṭātman* occurs only 13 times at the end of a or c.

Kumbhakarnas tu	duṣṭātmā	(2)
sa nāśayatu	„	(1)
bālyāt prabhṛti	„	(1)
prahartukāmo	„	(1)
na marṣayati	„	(1)
māṃ mōhayati	„	(1)

ii. Second group : compounds ending in *-ātman* with the metrical pattern v – v

Among them *mahātman* offers to the bard an almost unlimited scope. It occurs a few times in the nominative singular *mahātmā* in the first part of a *pāda*, but never in the second half. Its strong cases, except the nominative singular, have the metrical pattern v – – –, its weak cases the metrical pattern v – v – . The structure is always 4 + 4.

second half of a and c				second half of b and d			
v	–	–	–	v	–	v	–
ma	hāt	mā	naḥ (49)	ma	hāt	ma	nā (104)
ma	hāt	mā	nau (11)	ma	hāt	ma	bhiḥ (12)
ma	hāt	mā	nam (48)	ma	hāt	ma	ne (9)
				ma	hāt	ma	naḥ (179)
				ma	hāt	ma	noḥ (2)
				ma	hāt	ma	nām (16)
				ma	hāt	ma	ni (7)
				ma	hāt	ma	su (1)

Thus *mahātman* in the above forms occurs at least 468 times at the end of either a and c or b and d. It generously supplements the metrical limitations of the *mahā-* compounds (see Chapter 5) and puts

in the hands of the bard an epithet endowed with protean qualities. Here are a few illustrations :

Rāghavasya	mahātmanah	(15)
Śatrughnasya	„	(6)
Sugrīvasya	„	(14)
Rāghaveṇa	mahātmanā	(13)
Lakṣmaṇena	„	(8)
Sugrīveṇa	„	(8)
Vasiṣṭhena	„	(6)

Besides *mahātman* there are a few other compounds in *-ātman* which fulfil the same function : they never appear in the nominative singular at the end of a *pāda*. They are not often used in their strong cases at the end of a or c ; they mostly appear in their weak cases at the end of b or d. Their break-up is as follows :

durātman (58), *viditātman* (16), *bhāvitātman* (16), *kṛtātman* (11), *niyatātman* (3), *amitātman* (2). Examples :

Rāvaṇasya	durātmanah	(17)
Rāvaṇena	durātmanā	(11)
Rāmasya	viditātmanah	(8)
Rāmeṇa	viditātmanā	(5)
maharṣer	bhāvitātmanah	(5)
ṛṣīṇāṃ	bhāvitātmanām	(3)
munīnāṃ	„	(1)

Finally there are a few formulae ending in *antarātmanā*. Although their frequency is not very high, they are obviously stereotyped and form a fully formulaic *pāda* in b or d :

prahṛṣṭenāntarātmanā	(5)
kṛtārthenāntarātmanā	(4)
supṛītenāntarātmanā	(2)
santuṣṭenāntarātmanā	(1)
tvadgatenāntarātmanā	(2)
niḥsaṅgenāntarātmanā	(2)
viklavenāntarātmanā	(1)
vismītenāntarātmanā	(1)
sarveṇaivūntarātmanā	(1)

Structure 5 + 3 :

end of b or d : (v) · v -
Rāghava (423)

***Vaidehī* (217)**

Maithilī (93)

***Kausalyā* (31)**

The name of Rāma's mother occurs in the nominative and accusative singular.

***Sugriva* (i12)**

This name occurs in the nominative, vocative and accusative singular.

Saumitri (103)

Lakṣmaṇa (266)

Saumitri is used in the nominative, vocative, accusative and genitive singular.

***Lakṣmaṇa* offers a great variety of combinations, the most frequent being illustrated below :**

5 + 3 : x x x x v - v -

Lakṣ	ma	ṇaḥ	} (126)
Lakṣ	ma	ṇa	
Lakṣ	ma	ṇam	

$$\begin{array}{ccccccccc} 4+4: & \times & \times & \times & \times & \text{sa} & \text{lakṣ} & \text{ma} & \text{ṇaḥ} \\ & & & & & \text{sa} & \text{lakṣ} & \text{ma} & \text{ṇam} \end{array} \quad \left. \vphantom{\begin{array}{ccccccccc} 4+4: & \times & \times & \times & \times & \text{sa} & \text{lakṣ} & \text{ma} & \text{ṇaḥ} \\ & & & & & \text{sa} & \text{lakṣ} & \text{ma} & \text{ṇam} \end{array}} \right\} \quad (35)$$
$$\begin{array}{ccccccccc} 3+5: & \times & \times & \times & \text{sa} & \text{ha} & \text{lakṣ} & \text{ma} & \text{ṇaḥ} \\ & & & & \text{sa} & \text{ha} & \text{laks} & \text{ma} & \text{nam} \end{array} \quad (31)$$

Rā ma lakṣ ma ṇau (36)

0 + 8 : bhrātarau Rāmalakṣmaṇau (25)

Structure 4 + 4 :

end of a or c : v - - -

Daśagrīva (83)

end of b or d : - v - v -

Daśānana (35)

These two names of Rāvaṇa are used in the nominative, vocative and accusative singular. *Rāvaṇa* (- v -) at the end of b or d is used 130 times in the nominative, vocative and accusative singular.

Vibhīṣaṇa (124)

Structure 3 + 5 :

end of a or c : - v - - -

Kekayīputra (7)

end of b or d : - v - v -

Kekayīsuta (11)

The case of the name *Daśaratha* is interesting. With its three initial short syllables it can never appear at the beginning of a *pāda*. In the nominative, accusative and vocative singular it occurs 22 times as the second half of a or c, in the unusual metrical pattern v v v -. But in all its other occurrences it occupies syllables 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the *pāda* and according to the metrical value of the last two syllables of the *pāda*, it belongs either to a and c or to b and d. The bard can use alternative forms at will, in order to fulfil the metrical demands of the *śloka*. Thus

<i>a or c</i>		<i>b or d</i>	
x x	Daśara - - -	x x	Daśara - v -
rājā	Daśaratho nāma	rājā	Daśarathas tadā
tadā	Daśaratho rājā	svargaṃ	Daśaratho gataḥ
gate	Daśarathe svargam	x x	Daśaratham nṛpam
x x	Daśaratho rājā	x x	Daśarathaḥ sutam
x x	Daśaratham putraḥ	rājño	Daśarathasya tu
rājño	Daśarathasyāyam	rājño	Daśarathasya ca
rājño	Daśarathsyeyam	rājñā	Daśarathena ca
rājño	Daśarathasyaisaḥ		

This combination occurs 52 times at the end of a or c and 88 times at the end of b or d.

The form *Daśarathātmaja*, at the end of b or d, will be dealt with presently.

Besides proper names and patronymics there are three words used in compounds at the end of b and d which usually express

family relationships. They are : *ātmaja*, *nandana* and *vardhana*. They have the same metrical pattern : - v - and are always preceded by a short syllable in order to conform with the end of b and d : v - v -. *nandana* and *vardhana* are also used to denote other concepts than those of kinship. These three words are used in the nominative, vocative and accusative singular, and, at times in the nominative dual.

-ātmaja

Structure 4 + 4 :	x x x x nṛpātmaja	(16)
Structure 3 + 5 :	x x x pāṛthivātmaja	(4)
	Sagarātmaja	(6)
	Kuśikātmaja	(13)
	Varuṇātmaja	(1)
	Mārutātmaja	(38)
	Anilātmaja	(6)
	Pavanātmaja	(7)
	Janakātmajā	(67)
Structure 2 + 6 :	x x Daśarathātmaja	(23)
	naravarātmaja	(5)

-nandana

Structure 3 + 5 :	x x x Raghunandana	(113)
	Gādhinandana	(2)
	rājanandana	(1)
	kulanandana	(5)
	mitranandana	(5)
Structure 2 + 6 :	x x Rāghavanandana	(6)
	Ikṣvakunandana	(6)
	pāṛthivānandana	(1)
Structure 0 + 8 :	Ikṣvākukulanandana	(6)

-vardhana

Structure 3 + 5 :	x x x rāṣṭravardhana	(3)
	kulavardhana	(6)
	lakṣmivardhana	(7)
	prativardhana	(2)
	harṣavardhana	(2)
Structure 2 + 6 :	x x ānandavardhana	(18)

8

The ancient epic likes to present its heroes in terms of excellence and disposes of a great variety of expressions to denote their superlative qualities. Here again it is the metrical function of those expressions which determines their place in the *śloka*. The following list, therefore, classifies expressions of excellence in two categories ; those which fit the end of a and c and those which fit the end of b and d.

end of a and c	end of b and d
<i>śreṣṭha</i> (- -)	<i>vara</i> (v -)
<i>vyāghra</i> (- -)	<i>ṛṣabha</i> (- v -)
<i>śārdūla</i> (- - -)	<i>uttama</i> (v -)
	<i>sattama</i> (- v -)
	<i>puṅgava</i> (- v -)
	<i>kuñjara</i> (- v -)

All these expressions are mostly used in the nominative, vocative and accusative singular, although they appear at times in the nominative and accusative dual and plural and in the instrumental plural.

śreṣṭha is used in two different ways : either preceded by a genitive plural with a short penultimate : v - āṃ *śreṣṭha*, or as the last member of a compound. In the first case, we find an alternative form for the end of b and d when *śreṣṭha* is replaced by *vara*. The word *vara*, at the end of b and d is always preceded by a genitive plural with a short penultimate : v - āṃ *vara*. Here are a few examples of the substitution governed by metrical requirements :

end of a and c	end of b and d
x x x x v - āṃ <i>śreṣṭha</i>	x x x x v - āṃ <i>vara</i>
sa ri tāṃ <i>śreṣṭhā</i> (4)	sa ri tāṃ <i>varā</i> (1)
ja ya tāṃ <i>śreṣṭha</i> (3)	ja ya tāṃ <i>vara</i> (5)
ja pa tāṃ „ (3)	ja pa tāṃ „ (4)
va da tāṃ „ (1)	va da tāṃ „ (8)
dhan vi nāṃ „ (4)	dhan vi nāṃ „ (2)
rathi nāṃ „ (1)	rathi nāṃ „ (4)
rakṣa sām „ (8)	rakṣa sām „ (4)
asthra vi dām „ (4)	asthra vi dām „ (4)
vākya vi dām „ (3)	vākya vi dām „ (1)
dharmabhṛ tāṃ „ (3)	dharmabhṛ tāṃ „ (13)

śreṣṭha preceded by a genitive plural appears at least 42 times, while *vara* preceded by a genitive plural appears at least 98 times. *śreṣṭha*, the last member of a compound at the end of a and c occurs at least 203 times. It has two alternative forms suitable for the end of b and d : compounds ending in *uttama* and *sattama*. The most frequent examples of *śreṣṭha* at the end of a and c as the last member of a compound are :

structure 4 + 4 :	naraśreṣṭha	(50)
	hariśreṣṭha	(37)
	muniśreṣṭha	(22)
	kapiśreṣṭha	(12)
	dvijaśreṣṭha	(6)
	rathaśreṣṭha	(5)
structure 3 + 5 :	vānaraśreṣṭha	(21)
	parvataśreṣṭha	(3)

uttama at the end of b and d is always compounded with a nominal stem ending in -a, the resulting *sandhi* yielding -ottama. In this form it appears more than 160 times. Here are the most frequent instances :

structure 4 + 4 :	dvijottama	(6)
	narottama	(11)
	suottama	(8)
	hayottama	(10)
	śarottama	(10)
	nagottama	(6)
structure 3 + 5 :	puruṣottama	(15)
	parvatottama	(9)
	syandanottama	(5)
	vānarottama	(21)
	plavagottama	(9)
	rākṣasottama	(7)

Besides the above compounded form of *uttama*, the adjective is used independently at the end of b and d when preceded by a word ending with a short syllable with a final consonant. This occurs at least 91 times. Thus :

viśrutā sarid uttamā
yajate yajñam uttamam
vismayaṁ jagmur uttamam

In the structure 4 + 4 *uttama* is replaced by *ianuttama* (v – v –) and the preceding word always ends with a consonant. This occurs at least 72 times. Thus :

śaivam dhanur anuttamam
cara dharmam anuttamam
prītidānam anuttamam

sattama is always the last member of a compound and, in this form, appears at least 110 times at the end of b or d. It serves as a doublet of *uttama* when one more syllable is needed. Thus :

dvijottama (4 syllables) but *dvijasattama* (5 syllables)

The most frequent instances are :

harisattama	(20)
kapisattama	(10)
ṛṣisattama	(10)
munisattama	(9)
dvijasattama	(8)
rājasattama	(6)
plavagasattama	(6)
vānarasattama	(5)

vyāghra at the end of a and c and *ṛṣabha* at the end of b and d are always standing as the last members of a compound, *ṛṣabha* being always combined with a nominal stem ending in -a and thus yielding the *sandhi* -*arṣabha* (– v –). In this position *vyāghra* appears at least 111 times, and *ṛṣabha* at least 209 times. Here are the most frequent instances :

<i>end of a and c</i>		<i>end of b and d</i>	
naravyāghra	(52)	nararṣabha	(27)
puruṣavyāghra	(52)	puruṣarṣabha	(69)
rakṣasavyāghra	(3)	rākṣasarṣabha	(10)
		vānalarṣabha	(50)
		plavagarṣabha	(21)

śārdūla at the end of a or c and *puṅgava* and *kuṅjara* at the end of b and d always stand as the last members of a compound.

śārdūla appears at least 115 times at the end of a and c. Here are the most striking examples :

naraśārdūla	(25)
hariśārdūla	(15)
kapiśārdūla	(13)
muniśārdūla	(11)
rajaśārdūla	(10)
puruṣaśārdūla	(10)
vānaraśārdūla	(6)
rākṣasaśārdūla	(6)
plavagaśārdūla	(4)

puṅgava at the end of b or d occurs at least 147 times, the most frequent uses being :

munipuṅgava	(56)
haripuṅgava	(29)
vānarapuṅgava	(29)
rākṣasapuṅgava	(17)

kuñjara at the end of b and d occurs 25 times mostly in the *Sundara* and *Yuddha kāṇḍas* and under one form alone : *kapikuñjara*.

All these expressions of excellence aptly illustrate the richness of the material which the bard can use to fill his lines in all possible structures. For example :

	<i>end of a and c</i>	<i>end of b and d</i>
structure 4 + 4 :	× × × × naraśreṣṭha naravyāghra	× × × × narottama naraṣabha
structure 3 + 5 :	× × × naraśārdūla puruṣavyāghra	× × × narapuṅgava naraśattama
structure 2 + 6 :	× × puruṣaśārdūla	× × puruṣapuṅgava

A few ślokas are quoted now to illustrate some of the formulae analyzed so far :

abravīt praśritaṃ vākyam prasavārthaṃ dvijottamam /
yajño me kriyatāṃ vipra yathoktaṃ munipuṅgava // 1.12.2
atha Rāmo mahātejā Viśvāmitraṃ mahāmuniṃ /
papraccha muniśārdūlam kautūhalasamanvitaḥ // 1.30.21

taṃ candram iva puṣyeṇa yuktaṃ *dharmabhṛtāṃ varam* /
 yauvarājyenā yoktāsmi prītaḥ *puruṣapuṅgavam* // 2.2.10
 purohitam ca kuśalam ye cānye *dvijasattamāḥ* /
 tau ca tāta *maheṣvāsau bhrātarau Rāmalakṣmaṇau* // 2.64.16
 Anasūyāṃ *mahābhāgāṃ* tāpasīm *dharmacārīṇīm* /
 pratigṛhṇīṣva *Vaidehīm* abravīd *ṛsisattamaḥ* // 2.109.8
 mayā tu vividham vanyam saṃcitam *puruṣarṣabha* /
 tavārthe *puruṣavyāghra* pampāyās *tirasambhavam* // 3.70.13
 tayābhūtau *naravyāghrau Vaidehyā Rāmalakṣmaṇau* /
 vikṣamāṇau tu taṃ deśam tadā dadṛśatur mṛgam // 3.41.3
 tatas te *vānaraśreṣṭhaḥ* yathākālam yathāvidhi /
 ratnair vastraiśca bhakṣyaiśca topayitvā *dvijarṣabhān* // 4.25.26
 Suṣeṇas tu *harīśreṣṭhaḥ* proktavān *kapisattamān* /
 aśītiṃ yojanānām tu plaveyam *plavagarṣabhāḥ* // 4.64.9
 nikuñcya karṇau Hanumān utpaṭiṣyan *mahābalaḥ* /
 vānarān *vānaraśreṣṭha* idaṃ *vacanam abravīt* // 5.1.35
 sa tau dṛṣṭvā *naravyāghrau dhanvinau vānaraṣabhaḥ* /
 abhiplutau gires tasya śikharam bhayamohitaḥ // 5.33.26
 Sugrīvasya *vacāḥ śrutvā* sarve te *vānarottamāḥ* /
 sālān udyamya śailāṃśca *idaṃ vacanam abruvan* // 6.11.6
 evaṃ te *harīśārdūlāḥ* gacchanto baladarpitāḥ /
 apasyamste *giriśreṣṭham* sahyam *drumalatāyutam* // 6.4.34
taṃ uvāca mahātejāḥ kumbhayonir *mahātapāḥ* /
 svāgataṃ te *naraśreṣṭha* diṣṭyā prāpto'si *Rāghava* // 7.67.8
 upakāryān mahārḥmāśca pārthivānām *mahātmanām* /
 sānugānām *naraśreṣṭha* vyādideśa *mahādyutiḥ* // 7.83.5
tasya tad vacanam śrutvā Śatrughnasya *mahātmanaḥ* /
pratyuvāca mahātejāś Cyavano *Raghunandanam* // 7.59.3

AN UNDERGRADUATE SURVEY
OF THE DISCIPLINE OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE
IN AMERICA
PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Henry H.H. Remak

Much has changed since the day a quarter of a century ago when I made my debut before the International Comparative Literature Association at its congress of Chapel Hill in 1958 with a talk that had the same subject as the present one except that it dealt with an introductory course to Comparative Literature on the graduate level. But the first sentence of that talk could still stand inviolate today : "American students embarking on the graduate study of Comparative Literature are, as a rule, strongly motivated but poorly prepared."¹

It is precisely that consideration, though not *only* that one, that led the Indiana University Comparative Literature Program, since its inception in 1949, and unlike many other Comparative Literature Programs then and even now, to establish a curriculum on the undergraduate as well as on the graduate levels. The case for this is by no means easily made. It could well be—and has been—argued that the linguistic and literary infrastructure of most high school seniors entering a large state university with relatively permissive admission requirements is too flimsy to build a comparative curricular structure upon it. True enough. We recognize these facts by not offering the survey course until the junior level and requiring, as prerequisites, a sophomore course proceeding from scratch, viz. the non-comparative, close examination of individual texts, to comparative examination of different texts chosen from all three genres. Many of our majors have been introduced to comparative literature through freshmen courses such as "Major Characters in Western Literature", "Major Themes in Western Literature" and "Images of the Self : East and West". And a lot of them take, either immediately preceding the survey course, concurrently with it or just thereafter, courses on the junior level

surveying drama, narrative or lyric poetry, and historical periods from the middle ages to the twentieth century. (All majors must take at least one genre and one period course.) In addition, there are more specialized courses, depending on which of the four undergraduate tracks they enter : Western Literature, Asian-Western Literary Relations, Film Studies and Interrelationship of the Arts. Furthermore, we require successful completion of at least one advanced course in foreign literature read in the original language.

Of the principal motivating forces behind our undergraduate programme the first one has been listed in my introductory quotation : to counteract the poor preparation of potential comparative literature graduate students for graduate work. Often they harbour only a hazy notion of what comparative literature is. As important is the realization that comparative literature can be one of the rare binding factors in a liberal arts curriculum, establishing links and giving badly needed cohesion to what is often, in reality, a paper tiger, an accumulation of unrelated courses euphemistically called a 'humanistic education'.

And let us not minimize a very pragmatic motivating factor : student desire. Undergraduate students have voted for comparative literature with their feet. Like any other area in the Humanities and even in the Social Sciences, we are now counting our losses among those choosing a major, but the inherent attractiveness of our outlook has, by and large, been sustained, at least for the non-major, and I am struck by the passion for comparative literature, for breaking out of traditional enclosures, whether national or departmental, found among so many of our students. It is a youthful *Wanderlust* that has found an academic haven.

Personal passion is most effective and enduring when coupled with intellectual direction. This is where the survey comes in with its opportunities and problems.³

In the first place, enterprising youth and *discipline* have never gotten along very well. Comparative Literature students are, almost by definition, adventurous young people seeking liberation, and are pained when they discover earnest disciplinarians hiding behind smiling faculty countenances.

Secondly, while to the neophyte comparative literature looks like paradise, after a while he may feel bewildered, confused, insecure and frustrated. The purpose of an introductory survey is therefore

not only to present him with a foretaste of the rich menu offered on our table, but to inform him that the field does have an *identity*—not an absolute but a relative one—, that it has special emphases if not exclusivities in the type of topics it pursues. It has and needs no methodology of its own, but the application of these methodologies to comparative topics differs from other applications. The ‘comparative’ in comparative literature is not an historical accident but a distinguishing feature in its operations. Without *some* structure there can be no academic field of inquiry.

We are helped in this structuring by the relative *continuity of the profile* of Indiana comparatism. When we started out, as one of the first programmes mainly determined by *all* salient features of the *field* rather than oriented toward ruling *personalities* on the faculty, we were considered daring, controversial, even eccentric. In addition to the traditional study of *bi-national relationships* (now, unfortunately, declining) we developed very early, in the mid 1950’s, two new curricular conference, research and publication directions which have since *fait fortune* : the interrelationship of *literature with the arts*, and systematic attention to *Asia*, not only to Western and Southern Europe. The one major area that has been added to this emphasis in the last thirty years is film studies ; that is, the study of films, not the making of them. At least we are no longer controversial, perhaps even too uncontroversial, but we have a distinctive hypothesis as to what comparative literature is, we have a *profile* to offer to our students rather than a collection of courses and personalities. I am speaking of the past and of the present. I cannot vouch for the future. But for the last thirty years or so, our undergraduates have all been aware of our interpretation of Comparative Literature which starts off our Arts and Sciences catalogue entry :

The program in Comparative Literature is designed to introduce the student to the interrelationship of national literatures by comparing significant authors, ideas, and literary types in different ages and cultures. Comparative literature is also concerned with exploring the relationships between literature and the other arts, philosophy, religion, and the social and natural sciences.

In preparing the syllabus of the introductory survey (C 305, *Comparative Approaches to Literature : Theory and Method*),⁸ we keep in mind one cardinal consideration, viz. that theories as such

make little sense to undergraduate students unless they are working hypotheses tested by *historical illustrations* and *critical textual readings*. Sobered by experience we take no historical knowledge for granted. We spend little time on the history of comparative scholarship as such before 1945 (that belongs on the graduate level), but we get specific glimpses of the pattern of continuity and change in that scholarship via particulars, and we do raise the question of the impact of cultural, political and other conditioning of scholars. We do not confront our students right away with the bewildering pluralism of literary theory and its place in comparative scholarship today. It is not pedagogically wise to demolish before you have given them something to demolish and responsible tools to do it with. So we start with Carré, Wellek, Levin, Malone, and our own assessment of what comparative literature has been about in the last 35 years. While we hold forth on theory, but as concretely as we can, students read selections from Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* and the *Confessions*, and the entire texts of Goethe's *Werther* and Chateaubriand's *Atala* and *René*,⁴ which can serve as examples of *reception*, *influence*, *periodization* and *comparative analysis* of related works. We stress, in all the works read, their dual role as *historical documents* and *aesthetic monuments*, and in their latter capacity do not hesitate to enter the feared realm of *comparative value judgment*, a task which we can no longer afford to shirk. It is a central obligation of the Humanities. However, at this point in time, we limit deliberate value judgments to literatures from a relatively homogeneous cultural sphere such as Western Europe, Subsaharan Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia, etc.

The next fundamental aspect of historical/comparative scholarship which we broach is *periodization*. While the students read concise theoretical treatments on various types of periodization from Baroque and Classicism to Expressionism and Surrealism, including entries in reference works, and prepare individual oral reports on these, the instructor lectures on Romanticism and Realism as periodization guinea pigs for no other reason but that he happens to be strongly interested in them. During this phase of the course students read and compare Flaubert's *A Simple Heart* and Tolstoi's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, which can serve as illustrations of various approaches and criteria: *periodization*, *universal vs. national vs. individual values*, *cultural differences and analogies*, *diachronic vs. synchronic view of*

literature, impact of society on literature and of literature on society, reception factors (reputation, success, influence ; in this case : Russian literature on French soil), and, last but far from least, the richer intrinsic understanding of two works from two cultures as artistic entities by a thorough comparison of their features, in recognition of the fact that we create and experience by way of comparison.

The works studied so far are still major landmarks in the literary canon and make worthwhile reading by dint of perennial quality (though *Atala* and *René*, their powerful diction apart, are now of historic, symptomatic as much as or more than of 'literary excellence' interest). But comparative literary history cannot be grasped without taking note of the tremendous if ephemeral effect of what we now consider second- or third-rate works. Comparative Literature scholarship in *Trivallliteratur* has preceded current general preoccupation with this area by many years (as has, by the way, our long tradition of reception studies). On the other hand, the territory we must cover in an introductory course, the patience of undergraduate students, and the little time we have even for masterpieces, hardly permit us to have students spend much time in reading texts now deemed to be of dubious literary merit. It can be dreary to have these historically significant victims of the shifting fortunes of criticism treated with the humourless, *todernste Gründlichkeit* prevalent, alas, in so much of contemporary continental scholarship. My solution has been the reading of and reporting on a very scholarly but also very entertaining essay by an erstwhile resident of these blessed Pacific shores, Lawrence Marsden Price of the University of California in Berkeley, detailing the tremendous continental fortunes of George Lillo's immensely popular play *The London Merchant* or *The History of George Barnwell* (1731), a pioneer in middle class melodrama. I am going into some detail at this point because little has been written on the teaching of literature second-rate in quality but of first importance historically and culturally.

This is how the article starts :

On a certain morning long ago the apprentice George Barnwell, whilst going about the streets of London intent upon his master's business was accosted by a "gallant dainty dame and sumptuous in attire." She gave him a kiss and pressed him to come to Shoreditch and ask for Mistress Millwood's house, next door unto "the Gun." George's com-

plance cost him his virtue. His visits became frequent, and to satisfy the demands of his exacting mistress he purloined many pounds from the till of his Master Thorowgood. After the money had been spent in riotous living, Millwood threatened to dismiss her victim, but George's imagination had been stimulated by much wine :

"An uncle I have,
At Ludlow he doth dwell.
He is a Grazier, which in wealth
Doth all the rest excel :
Ere I will live in lack," quoth he,
"And have no coyn for thee
I'll rob his house, and murder him."
"Why should you not," quoth she.

George did so, but this money too was soon squandered.

And therefore now in railing sort
She thrust him out the door,
Which is the just reward they get
That spend upon a whore.

And a little later, when reporting on the very favourable reception of the play in London, Price writes : "A gentlewoman wrote to a literary journal, declaring 'that none but a common prostitute could find fault with it' ", but, Price adds, "even from that source there were no unfavorable comments."⁵

Price is a serious, positivistic, some people even think dry scholar. There is no lack of solid and hard-to-get historical information in his essay that bears on perennial factors of comparative literary history : the spectacular ups and downs of *popular taste* ; the shifting winds of *literary fortune* and the moral-socio-psychological-economic factors shaping it (e.g. differences of strong reception in England vs. weaker impact in France and Germany explained by the relative sub-development of a substantial *middle class* in France and Germany) ; the difference between *metropolitan and provincial play audiences* ; the specific modifications made in dramatic texts in order to play up to *national sensitivities*, not to speak of the demands for *burlesque entertainment* complete with Scapin, Columбина and Hanswurst ; the shackles imposed by French *bienséance* on English *vulgarités* ; German reliance, throughout much of the 18th century, on French *translations* from the English rather than on English originals ; the historical importance not only of *forgotten authors* such as Dorat, the Abbé Raynal, Pierre Clément, Charles Colle, La Harpe, Trudaine de

Montigny, Anseaume, Mercier in France, Bassewitz, Gellius, Mayberg, Stephanie der Ältere, Schröder in Germany and Austria, but also, often forgotten, the frequency and intensity with which first-rate authors like the Abbé Prevost, Diderot, Lessing, Tieck or Goethe were involved with second-rate authors and works pending the sorting out of the great and not-so-great by subsequent literary history. And all this not hanging from the skeletal branches of dried-out trunks but taken *sur le vif* and with the kind of relish that seems to be banished from the grim mazes of contemporary literary theory today.

Such historical aperçus, far from being dust-laden esoteric exercises in dated erudition, can be lively illustrations of the fact, increasingly stressed in contemporary research, that literary history is, after all, part of *cultural history*, and that in this respect the fortunes of *George Barnwell* abroad are no different from so contemporary a phenomenon as Hermann Hesse's unexpectedly continuous impact on American high school and even college students which Egon Schwarz traces in his comprehensive, wonderfully empathic and yet detached lead article on "Hesse, the American Youth Movement, and Literary Evaluation" in the October 1970 issue of *PMLA*, which we also read and discuss. A bit of contemporary relevance of 'historic' materials is a welcome motivating factor in an undergraduate course now and then.

Thematology is not only one of the most catholic and enduring elements of the study of world literature but illustrates tellingly the resurrection and metamorphosis of angles of scholarship once dominating, then declared dead, and, lo and behold, arising again like a Phoenix from the ashes of disdain. We try to clarify terms such as *themes* (suicide, adultery, incest, fratricide etc.) by discussing e.g. François Jost's essay on suicide in his excellent *Introduction to Comparative Literature* (1974), and *motifs* (such as Prometheus, Electra, Faust, Don Juan and the Maid of Orleans^a); we then illustrate the comparative dimensions of the theme of immoralism by comparing Gide's *The Immoralist* with Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, and the Alcestis motif by comparing Euripides' *Alcestis* with T.S. Eliot's *Cocktail Party*. This gives us our first exposure to the dramatic genre and leads into a more systematic study of *genre definitions* in reference works from Shipley's *Dictionary of World Literature* and Wellek's *Theory of Literature* to Preminger's *Ency-*

lopedia of Poetry and Poetics, Weisstein's "Study of Literary Genres" (1971),⁷ and M.H. Abrams' latest *Glossary of Literary Terms* edition (an enterprise which, incidentally, teaches students that later editions are not necessarily preferable in all respects to earlier ones).

The next biggest chunk is the *comparative analysis of translations*, probably the most exclusive bailiwick of comparative studies, and especially important since it is centripetal and text-oriented rather than centrifugal and context-oriented like so much else in comparative literature. At this point, after doing some common readings on problems in translation in general (Frenz,⁸ Escarpit⁹), I split up the class into two sections depending upon whether we study translations from the German, or from French and Spanish. Passive translation analyses and active translation exercises by the students, line after line, from prose and verse, have proved, time after time, to be one of the most productive segments of the course, since students are actually *doing*, not just 'reading' or 'writing about'. It also furnishes a principal opportunity of experiencing the primary importance of the *foreign language* with all its nuances and the rarity, nay practically absence of complete correspondences between any words in two languages.

The final larger segment of the course is devoted to the *interdisciplinary dimensions* of Comparative Literature. Here again, while the class does not split up, oral reports are geared to the individual student's interest,¹⁰ whether in literature and film, literature and the visual arts, literature and music, literature and religion, etc. We ask each student, however, to stress elements in his report that may have larger bearings on the interdisciplinary approach to literature as such and its particular place in Comparative Literature.

The interdisciplinary thrust, which clearly corresponds to current tendencies not only in literary but in all scholarship of some scope, leads naturally into the finale of the course, which tries to call attention to the *future of our discipline*. Next in importance to its interdisciplinary dynamics is the linkage between the forceful and, in countries like France and Germany, not only dominating but domineering sway of *literary theory*, on the one hand, and the *practice of comparative literature*, on the other.¹¹ There is a clear and present danger that Comparative Literature is becoming a footnote or, at best, a subcategory of the theory of literature. Instead, I argue for a *fivefold definition of our mission* which claims neither

absolute control of its territory nor fragments and marginalizes our orbit of inquiry. I describe these five lines of endeavour as follows : (1) Comparative Literature as the principal *laboratory for any theory of literature* ; (2) Comparative Literature as a *supra-national synthesis* of historical periods, movements, currents, trends, themes and stylistic features based on two or more national or equivalent literary cultures ; (3) Comparative Literature as *literary criticism* via the analytic, interpretive and evaluative juxtaposition of two or more literary texts from different cultures ; (4) Comparative Literature as the “*foreign relations*” aspects of certain works : sources, intermediaries, reception, success, influence, translations, as well as national images, attitudes and foreign travel ; (5) the *Interdisciplinary* approach to Comparative Literature, which may utilize any of the four categories preceding.^{1 2}

No hierarchy among these five components is posited, but at this moment the highest urgency, it seems to me, is the first of these assignments, viz. Comparative Literature as the principal laboratory for any theory of literature. The gap between what the theorists and what we are doing is far too wide and too deep. Therefore I devote a couple of meetings to the introduction of three theories : structuralism, reception theory and the Marxist approach to literature, and suggest examples how they can be fruitful to comparative investigation and, at the same time, be tested against our ‘laboratory’ findings.

One extra meeting is usually devoted to a guest speaker introducing the students to a cultural orbit with which their instructor is not familiar, be it in Slavic, African or Asian literatures. That is severely inadequate, but given the time problem the best we have been able to do so far.

When I have been speaking of “we” I have not indulged in the *pluralis majestatis* nor, for that matter, in the *pluralis modestiae*, but have been literally correct, for the last two times I co-taught the course with an undergraduate honours intern who planned it with me and participated in every teaching and testing phase of it. For them it meant, I am sure, an active reinforcement of their previous passive knowledge of the field ; for me it was an exhilarating and sometimes chastening experience. I am equally sure that they, closer in age and in status to our students, were able to receive reactions and suggestions from them that might have been withheld from me.

We also tried to demonstrate—not only talk about—some humanism by having each student submit, as his first assignment, an autobiography. Through it I could, to some extent, relate the specific warm body to the particular material available. With their autobiographies in my hands, I spoke with every student for half an hour in my office. Just a friendly chat. We also resorted to the usual "instruction evaluation" forms after the semester's work had been done, encouraging individualized perceptions rather than canned questionnaires.

Nothing is further from my mind than to suggest that the course was a spectacular success and that there are no problems. To those mentioned at the outset I need to add just one more: the foreign language problem. We have to read the class materials in English since our students have taken different languages. But we insist that every student does some specified reading, both primary and secondary, in his first or, sometimes, his second foreign language. The languages are almost always French, German, Italian or Spanish, which I can handle, occasionally Russian, Japanese or Chinese, which I can't and where a colleague helps out.

I do not want to conclude this report with some kind of fanfare. It is just one way, among many, of organizing an undergraduate survey course. I particularly want to eschew any assertion or even implication that my 'model' and my practice are better than any others current in the United States, let alone elsewhere. Comparative literature is a vast field and there is no programme that must not emphasize certain directions at the expense of others. Even relative diachronic uniformity in the structuring of an introductory course, whether undergraduate or graduate, is well nigh impossible to achieve because (a) our students come, compared to European educational systems, to college with highly heterogeneous preparations, and (b) that is particularly so for a field as extensive and varied as Comparative Literature.¹³ All I have hoped to accomplish with this essay is to stimulate the thinking of comparatists in charge of such a course with concrete ideas and tangible illustrations.¹⁴

NOTES

1 "The Organization of an Introductory Survey", *Comparative Literature*. Proceedings of the ICLA Congress at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, ed. Werner P. Friederich (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1959), I, 222-23.

2 This essay was presented at the triennial meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association held at the University of California in Santa Barbara on March 25, 1983.

3 It is understood that I describe the course the way I have taught it. It rotates among faculty and my colleagues use, of course, varying approaches.

4 I make it a point to read aloud key passages from texts, poetry and prose, in foreign languages to bring to life their untranslatable sonorous values, often neglected in our teaching. If we had more time I would have students read aloud scenes in dramas and even act them out. Reading aloud is, of course, an indispensable feature when we come to our translation exercises.

5 "George Barnwell Abroad", *Comparative Literature*, II, 2 (Spring 1950), 126-56.

6 I explain and try to justify my particular definitions and uses of 'theme' and 'motif' in class but call attention to the fact that there are wide divergences and outright contradictions in the English usages of these terms.

7 In Newton P. Stallknecht and Horst Frenz, eds., *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective* (Carbondale, Illinois, 1971), pp. 248-74.

8 Horst Frenz, "The Art of Translation", in Frenz and Stallknecht, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 98-121.

9 Robert Escarpit, "'Creative Treason' as a Key to Literature", *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, X (1961), 16-26. In addition, there are readings geared to problems of translating from specific languages, usually French and German, into English, or from English into French and German.

10 I do not want to burden this rather relaxed essay with test-and-paper details. Suffice it to say that in addition to an oral report or two we provide the normal apparatus of testing: a midterm and a final examination, a few short theoretical assignments (summaries and critiques) in writing and two six-to-eight-page papers, with minimal bibliography, comparing two related or analogous primary works in different languages with each other.

11 At present we have no other systematic course on the undergraduate level introducing our majors to literary theory. For that reason some of my colleagues who teach C 305 give more attention than I do to literary theory outside of Comparative Literature proper.

12 See my "The Future of Comparative Literature", in *Actes du VII^e Congrès de l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée* (Budapest, 1980), pp. 429-37, particularly p. 436.

13 Other recent discussions of the organization of introductory courses to Comparative Literature on the undergraduate level in American colleges and universities, all in *ACLAN*, Newsletter of the American Comparative Literature Association, are: Stephen G. Nichols, "Introducing the Literature: A Modest Proposal" (X, 1, Spring 1978, 14-20); the keenly sensible "Introductory Course in Comparative Literature" by Ralph Freedman (XI, 1, Spring 1979, 29-36); the judicious "Report of the Committee on Undergraduate Programs" (Claus Clüver, John Erwin, Stephen Nichols, Jacqueline Schaefer, Eva Stadler and Elizabeth Trahane, XIII, 1 and 2, Spring and Fall 1981, 3-16); and John Erwin's "The Teaching of Comparative Literature", *ibid.*, pp. 18-23. A good many observations in Ulrich Weisstein's "Introduction to Graduate Studies in Comp. Lit.

at Indiana University : A Description and Auto-Critique" (XI, 1, Spring 1979, 42-53) are relevant to the undergraduate course.

14 I wish to thank my colleague, Professor Claus Clüver, who has read this ms critically and has made a number of excellent suggestions to which I have responded, if minimally. He bears no responsibility for whatever may remain problematic in my thoughts.

THE POETICS OF THE METROPOLIS IN PHILIPPINE LITERATURE

E. San Juan, Jr.

Unlike the western industrialized metropolis sprung from the eleventh-twelfth century *burg* (bourg, borough) of the nascent merchant class built in a circular pattern outside the walls of the medieval monastery or ecclesiastical enclave, the city of Manila (now Metro-Manila, embracing Quezon City, the official capital, and adjacent suburbs and sub-cities) was 'founded' by the Spanish conquistador Miguel Lopez de Legaspi on 19 May 1571 on the ruins of an Islamic settlement, the fortified hamlet of 'May-Nila' ruled by two native rajahs.

I want to emphasize this initial and initiating fact as the constitutive element of difference between the western conception of the city and the Philippine (in a sense peculiarly Third World) approach. For the truth is that it was not through the clearing of wilderness to establish guilds and market-fairs, but through organized violence and the forcible imposition of feudal Christianity and theocratic authority that the scaffolding of the Philippine cities—not just Manila—was erected. In retrospect, this twofold motion of negation and gestation—a dialectical unity of opposites—significantly parallels the artistic process itself as a double movement of exclusion and synthesis, and subsumes the linguistic phases of metaphor and metonymy.¹

Suffice it for the limited scope of this inquiry to extrapolate the nature of three centuries of Spanish subjugation of the Philippines from Legaspi's ritual act of concluding a peace treaty with the vanquished Muslim chiefs whose town was reduced to ashes, with the artillery of twenty-odd vessels presiding over this reconciliation. The treaty demonstrated to all the collusion of the Cross and Sword, church and state. But the narrative of the chronicles suggests

an inverted anachronism, or more precisely a kind of conflation of two socio-economic formations: the tribal-communal and the mercantile-capitalist. We are told that to symbolize taking possession of the land, the Spaniards ceremonially lopped off the branches of a tree; but the Filipino chiefs, instead of enacting the performance of a traditional blood pact to signify their vassalage to the Spanish monarch, chose to have a public notary attest to their irreversible conversion.⁹

I submit that we have, in this tell-tale foregrounding of the written contract in the native consciousness, a seminal conjuncture whose archaeology has not yet been fully explored, the elements of an interpretive model of the city, its integrity and protean manifestations, in literature.

This model would derive from the proposition that a city whose genealogy is inscribed in a contract forged from conquest and expropriation can reproduce itself in literary form in two ways: first, as a metaphor of the primordial unity and sacred origin of social life, celebrating the victor and its numinous or mystical aura; or second, as a metonymy/synecdoche, a differential or displacing technique correlating action and thought, the document or theory animating practice and the future projects we contemplate. Conversely, the projects evolving will dictate in the process the narrative of the making of contracts, coalitions, parties, etc. In Philippine literature, if I may anticipate what follows, the city of history, as the raw material worked into ideology and thus over-determined in its meanings and implications, contains within itself a dialectical mode of resolving historic contradictions—not just in the mechanics of literary form but in the logic of their content—only insofar as the writer abandons the mythic potential of the city and pursues its metonymic thrust and direction.

This meditation on the city, on 'Manila' as one term of the opposition of which the other could be virgin islands/the countryside, aims to describe in somewhat schematic fashion the ambivalent and polarizing attitudes Filipino writers have assumed toward the city. Adopting a chronological mapping-out of the terrain, we begin before Manila's founding, from the eighth century to Magellan's arrival in 1521, when commerce and trade with China, India and desultory European merchants flourished. The growth of coastal towns into trading centres testifies to a rupture analogous to

the transformation of Manila not as a Muslim citadel but as terminal of the galleon trade linking Mexico and Europe to Asia.

A novel (now in progress) that may propose a symptomatic reading of Manila's genesis is being completed by Ninotchka Rosca, a Filipina fictionist now in self-exile in Hawaii, entitled *Soliman of Manila : A Historical Novel*. Her outline uses the fortified village of the Muslim rajahs less as picturesque setting than a conflict-ridden milieu where the material crystallization of "racial and historical memory" (as artifacts) persist, becoming the prize-object of contestation. Predictably, in her version, Soliman succumbs because his understanding operated within a limited organic framework, within a personalistic ethos based on a communal mode of production, whereas the Spanish invaders had bargained time for space, winning allies by force or propaganda among inland tribes surrounding Manila. The Spaniards eventually encircled Soliman's palisades by insuring their control of supply lines, finally conquering by a strategy of detour and displacement.³ A footnote to this novelistic drama can be cited here : on the wreckage of Soliman's village, the Spaniards built Fort Santiago, the nucleus for what later became in 1571 a Walled City called 'Intramuros'. This Asian outpost of the Spanish empire, a springboard for trade with China and not, as originally conceived, for raiding the spices of the Moluccas, was awarded a royal coat of arms by King Philip II and christened "the Noble and Ever Loyal City".⁴

An existentialist reading of Manila as the site of a moral dilemma, the vicissitudes of a metaphysical doubt, has been rendered in the story "I, Suliman" by Adrian Cristobal, a leading technocrat of the Marcos dictatorship. For Cristobal, Manila is only a copy of the absurd universe of Kafka or Camus which occasions Soliman's stoic quest for self-fulfilment. In a sustained interior monologue, Soliman mechanically orders the burning of Manila as a solitary decision, to prevent the "seat of our happiness" from being "the cursed prison of our race". The city serves only as a pawn in the game of competing wills or monads. Cristobal establishes an ironic equivalence between the city and subjective freedom, identifying the city's destruction with a personal heroism based on the will to risk one's life in a struggle predestined to defeat. This is less a diagnosis of the inadequacy of the tribal formation than of the uprooted Manila Intellectual's resentful dream of power

evaporating in mock-heroic impotence. Characteristically, Cristobal is trapped within solipsistic idealism as he attributes the Spanish conquest to their single-minded devotion to faith, an irrationalism which an ostensibly religious writer like Nick Joaquin would not be found guilty of.⁵

From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, Manila failed to emerge from the cocoon of Intramuros, the "Walled City" envlroned by numerous churches, with its suburbs functioning as country seats for the aristocratic Peninsulars (Spaniards in the Philippines born in Spain) and as quarantined sectors for certain allens like the Chinese. For two years, 1762-64, the British occupied Intramuros, revealing thus the internal contradictions of Spanish hegemony over the archipelago. But the literature produced by the friars, as well as the reproduction of medieval romances, saints' lives, sermons and commentaries on the Gospels, etc. in an atmosphere of censorship and inquisition, failed to articulate or even hint at the long-smouldering contradictions in the city, as witnessed by the innumerable deadly skirmishes and feuds between the secular office of the Governor-General and the religious orders.

One incident, the central exhibit of this fatal cleavage in the power bloc defining the city's primal unity, is the assassination of Governor Fernando Bustamante y Bustillo (1717-19). His honesty and fidelity to the King impelled him to challenge the undisputed hegemony of the friars, provoking the latter to murder him in his pulace within the Walled City.

An extremely multi-faceted, self-conscious narrative, formerly ascribed to Father Jose Burgos (1860-72), the first nationalist martyr, of the Bustamante affair is found in *La Loba Negra* (The Black She-Wolf). This work spans the period 1717-26 and revolves around Bustmantes' attempt to purge the city of corruption, specifically the friars' manipulation of the galleon trade and their tampering with the public treasury. It appears that the city officials then were extorting bribes from wealthy citizens, as evinced by the testimony of a Dutch observer describing Manila circa 1717 which is incorporated in the text of the narrative :

It's a big city protected by a strong wall surrounding it. The houses are large and beautiful . . . The inhabitants, mostly Spaniards, live a life of ostentation and leisure with nothing to worry about. Most of their foodstuffs and general merchandise are brought over by the Sangleya

(Chinese merchants) who come from China and who own attractive and well-stocked stores displaying a lot of clothing brought over by their ships and some aravels from New Spain. Gold and silver coins are in abundance and foreign exchange is a thriving business.

A seaport which the natives call May-Nilad is washed by a swift and treacherous river the Mapagsic, somewhat big and navigable.

The writer thus disrupts the myth of the city's original unity with the intrusion of a Protestant (Dutch) conscience, emptying the plenitude of the city as symbol of harmony between Church and State.

In the fable's analysis of the ordeal and killing of the King's representative, the city assumes the form of a labyrinth of masked, frocked or hooded conspirators staging a putsch, with the churchyards, streets and plazas serving as the theatre for an inquisitorial pogrom. The syntax of intrigue cancels any transparency of motivation. With the city depicted as a microcosmic altar for the sacrifice of the King's surrogate, the widow and children of the murdered Governor proceed to carry out their vow of revenge by retreating to the countryside. Their strategy recapitulates Legaspi's outflanking and centrifugal move to isolate Soliman. A year after her pilgrimage away from the city, the widow (or her daughter) metamorphoses into the legendary outlaw, the "Black She-Wolf", displacing the city's control of the countryside and doubling the friars' rule of terror by her own incarnation of what has been repressed: the real historic contradiction between the Filipino masses and the exploitative institutions of the Church, agents of Spanish colonialism. The Black She-Wolf's reprisals assume the magnitude of a natural force, a figure of nemesis resolving social contradictions in practice and giving substance to the law of mercantilist competition deprived of pietistic rationalizations. The method of quasi-chronicling events is meant to demystify the notion of divine intervention in history: calamities—assault by pirates and pestilence—devastate Manila and its suburbs between 1720-25, "years of dark terror and criminality stained by persecutions between Spanish civilians and religious".

Since Manila up to 1870 served primarily to support the lucrative Mexico-Philippines galleon trade for the benefit of the church and a tiny stratum of bureaucrats, it virtually existed as an island unto itself—a trope suggesting the profound discrepancy between the ideology of Christian salvation and the practice of the friars through-

out the islands. The concurrence of thriving commercial activity and disintegrating civic unity, the crisis between secular administrators and religious orders, and later between Spanish and native priests, intimating sharpening class antagonisms underlying the crises, are powerfully registered by the landscape drawn at the end of *La Loba Negra* amid the irrepressible terror inflicted on the Church by the female victim-avenger—the concrete vehicle also of the mute, aggrieved millions tilling the soil and supplying food and other necessities to the city :

Manila . . . was in the zenith of her commercial life. In her bay were anchored many ships flying the flags of different European and Asian countries. There were large and commodious homes on her principal streets, and business was brisk. The citizens as well as the religious were secretly carrying deadly weapons on their belts under their capes. There were bloody encounters among them, often resulting in death, while Manila sparkled on the horizon as one of the most prosperous cities of the Orient. The documents we have before us, however, show that two-thirds of the islands were completely neglected so that Manila authorities were not aware of events in these places until after a year. In many places, the little rulers kept administering their respective territories and *sittos*, practising their own laws and their ancient religion which was partly Muslim and partly Hindu from India, where it was propagated to the last confines of the islands of Malaysia and Polynesia.⁷

The situation described above persisted, explaining in part the British capture of Manila in 1762-64, until the mercantile system which artificially isolated Manila from international contacts was phased out by the reforms of Governor Basco y Vargas (1778-87).

The year 1834 saw the opening of Manila to world trade, exposing the 'walled-fortress' sensibility to the dynamic pressures of expanded commodity production. From 1809 to 1846, with thirty-nine merchant firms owned by English, American and French entrepreneurs operating in Manila, the city burst out from the cloistered atmosphere of Intramuros and pursued the adventure of commodities through the arcades and bazaars of adjoining districts like Binondo, Quiapo, Palos, etc. In parallel course, the Filipino imagination unshackled itself from the bonds of medieval romanticism and adopted the liberal and democratizing outlook of realism prevailing in nineteenth-century Europe.

About less than fifty years after the fall of the Bastille and the

rise of the European bourgeoisie as the ruling class of industrialized and urbanized nations, an epic romance by Francisco Balagtas entitled *Florante at Laura* (1838) was published. Using an elaborate allegorical plot (to escape official censorship), Balagtas dramatized the duplicitous stratagems of an individualist usurper who seizes control of a feudal city, Albania, from its rightful heir. The heir Florante is offered as a prey to ferocious beasts in a nightmarish jungle, the absolute antithesis to the city as the fountainhead of love, beauty, wisdom, joy. Ironically, Balagtas is supposed to be attacking the city, Manila, and what it stood for; but his adherence to the Greek idea of the city-state and its ideals of decorum, proportion, and civility, seems to undercut his intention until we realize, on deeper probing, that the city he seemingly acclaims is the space of treachery; the space of predatory competitiveness, avarice and greed for power; it is the space where individuals can conceal private selfish motives through stylized manners, conventional gestures, formulas of speech and thoughts. In the city, the inhabitants are easily duped by charlatans and demagogues, coaxed to act as a rebellious mob (see stanzas 378-79). Not that Balagtas is trying to render Le Bon's psychology of the crowds into metrical romance. Himself victimized by the landlord-elite, Balagtas targetted not the fact of a hierarchic, sacramental order but rather its degeneration, its subversion by putative or nominal guardians. Disintegration of this civic, hierarchical system—the source of peace, love, harmony, creative self-fulfilment—will yield only the reign of the brute, the reign of *lex talionis*.⁶

It is not surprising at this point to observe our interpretive model of two possible modes of representing the city, the metaphoric and the metonymic, grounding itself in the historical transition of Manila from the 'Walled City' resembling Balagtas "Albania" to the dispersed commercial/trading centre adumbrated in *La Loba Negra*. In the same breath, we perceive the emergence of the classic disparity implicit in those modes between the classical conception of the city which informs Balagtas' allegory, and the romantic critique saturating the text of *La Loba Negra*. In the latter we may recall the tendency to valorize the primitive as a "return of the repressed" and the nihilistic repudiation of the degenerate ethos of the city. (Balagtas succeeds in thwarting this possibility by the ruse of inventing the character of Aladin, the chivalric Moor, who rescues

Florante from the beasts and helps him recapture the city, thus validating the hierarchical order and legitimizing absolute monarchy.) We encounter at this point a vast amount of didactic writing—the ubiquitous example from the anthologies is the collection of moralizing letters by Father Modesto de Castro entitled *Urbana at Felisa* (1864)—with the all too familiar motif of the city as the diabolic snare or trap for innocent, virtuous maidens venturing from pastoral retreats. In this context, the world (read: Manila) abounds with sinful temptations, so that transactions with the Other must be performed in strict obedience to Church-sanctioned rules of conduct and propriety. In other words, without a patriarch-oriented hermeneutics and code, the city is a many-layered text of puzzling insinuations and ambiguities to be deciphered at one's own risk. We are now at the threshold of the modernist interpretation of city experience.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the paradigmatic and centralizing role of Manila, its dream of becoming the womb and matrix of Renaissance virtù and Roman piety, has been severely undermined by the emergence of petty commodity production, competition between import-export middlemen or compradors, and the concentration of the *principalia* (the native elite) on cultivating export-crops. For the elite, the city now becomes a constricting playground good only as a jumping-off point for travel to and study in Europe. While it was the city-born-and-bred worker Andres Bonifacio who would rally the masses at the city outskirts, inspired by such books as Hugo's *Les Miserables* and Sue's *The Wandering Jew* (Sue's forté was the Parisian underworld milieu), it was the *principalia's* offspring, Jose Rizal, born and raised in the province of Laguna but educated in Madrid, Paris and Berlin, who would privilege the city as the historic social text, the veritable palimpsest, of class contradictions.

In his first novel *Noli Me Tangere* (1886), Rizal charted the trials of a creole *ilustrado* as he falls victim to the repressive maneuvers of the religious orders in the bucolic setting of his hometown in San Diego. The novel begins with the protagonist Ibarra's arrival in Manila from Europe, discovering "the phenomenon of an unchanging city in a country of uncertainties"⁹. Immediately Ibarra learns the tragic fate of his father who, accused as a heretic/freethinker, had his body condemned to lie outside the

Catholic cemetery. Before shifting the narrative to San Diego, Rizal (in Chapter 8) unfolds the city's signifiers as indices and symbols of class conflict. However, unlike the dilettante *flaneur* of Baudelaire's time apprehending the decay of the *interieur* into the department store's labyrinth of merchandise (as Walter Benjamin has acutely noted¹⁰), Rizal's embattled hero surveys the panorama of crowds. He anticipates the coming of a chain-gang of native prisoners based on childhood memories :

...The prisoners were usually tall men with stern faces, whom Ibarra had never seen smile but whose eyes flashed when the whip fell whistling across their shoulders....Once in his boyhood Ibarra had witnessed a scene that had struck his imagination. It had been high noon ; the sun's rays fell mercilessly. Under the poor shade of a wooden cart lay one of those unfortunates, unconscious, his eyes staring wide. Two of his fellows were silently putting together a bamboo litter, without anger, without sorrow, without impatience—that, it was said, was what the natives were like. You today, our turn tomorrow, they seemed to be telling themselves. People hurried by without a glance ; women passed, looked and went on their way ; the sight was common enough, so common that hearts had grown calloused. The carriages rolled by, their varnished bodies gleaming in the rays of a brilliant sun in a cloudless sky. He varnished alone, a boy of eleven, newly arrived in the city, had been touched ; he alone, he felt sure, had slept badly because of it.¹¹

It is thus that the narrative reflects from the surface of the city landscape the agonies and resistance of the populace, splitting the character's sensibility into discordant fragments, allowing the submerged historicity of the city to problematize his stance of detachment. The doubling of the protagonist's consciousness allows him to glimpse the materiality of dreams, hopes, memory itself in the presence of human labour :

To his left, from the cigar factory at Arroceros, came the rattle and clatter of the women cigar-makers beating tobacco leaves.... He imagined the women's lively chatter, the broad jokes, so reminiscent of the district of Lavaplés in Madrid, where other cigar-women rioted and put the despised policemen to rout with ribald laughter.

The Botanical Garden dispelled these pleasant recollections ; an odious comparison put before his eyes the botanical gardens in Europe, in countries where it cost much money and determination to make a leaf grow or a bud flower.... Ibarra turned his eyes away and saw to his right the old city of Manila, surrounded still by its walls and moats like an undernourished adolescent wrapped in her grandmother's finery.¹²

In Rizal's second novel, *El Filibusterismo* (1891), the city becomes the testing ground for realizing Simoun's (Ibarra in disguise) plan for revenge. The city becomes thick, equivocally plural and dense with dissonant character-types, ramifying into diverse and multiple locations. But Simoun's scheme to rescue his former sweetheart Maria Clara from a convent collapses with her death, resulting in amplifying the general atmosphere of chagrin and bitter disillusionment of many Filipinos, illustrated vividly in the youth Isagani's "bitterness for his unrequited love" so that

even the interminable port works [outside the Walled City], to which in other times he had dedicated no less than three odes, appeared to him absurd, ridiculous, puerile.

The port, ah, the port of Manila, a bastard that from the moment of conception had brought only humiliation and shame to all! If, at least, after so much sacrifice, it were not to turn out a disgusting abortion!"

Rizal's imagery and comparisons in the preceding two quotations convey an explicit devaluation of the city from its mythical stature. Just as the *Noli* introduced the hierarchical structure of society at a dinner party in the city, the *Fili*'s climactic episode occurs during a wedding feast in the same house where the city's high secular and religious officials would be assembled.

I would argue that Rizal could envision the conspiratorial and putschist scheme of Simoun, the masquerading ironist fabricating revelations behind the scene, only in the city because by offering infinite possibilities of chance encounters, coincidences, fortuitous and accidental happenings, Manila generates the conditions for the individual subject disappearing and merging with the interplay of collective forces, social classes, in order to trace the path of his/her personal destiny. This also explains why the city is the principal arena where games, performances, tricks and illusionary inventions of all kinds—I emphasize the episode of the talking mummy in Chapter 18—can thrive naturally, so to speak, though all are contrived, with their impact transgressing normal routine and exposing the truth of social domination. Although Rizal concludes Simoun's quest with his suicide, with the organic life of Nature in the background naturalizing his death, it is the city of Manila which we sense seething underneath and convulsed with all the unresolved conflicts temporarily pacified by nostalgic utopian

longings. For Rizal, imprisoned in Fort Santiago and executed just outside the Walled City, it is the political struggle for control of the city that will elucidate the truth of ideas vis-à-vis objective reality, and the power of will. For whoever commands the city, determines the destiny of the whole nation.

Despite massive popular support for the 1896 revolution against Spain, it failed to seize the city chiefly because the vacillating *ilustrado* leadership of the revolutionary forces temporized and trusted the invading U.S. army to liberate it for the Philippine Republic. It took the intellectual-critical energies of a whole generation to recuperate Rizal's insight that Manila determines the fate of the nation, insofar as it extracts the wealth of the labouring masses in the countryside. The cardinal lesson gained in the period before the seizure of Manila in 1898 by the American invaders and the Sakdalista revolt of 1935, apart from the fact that the city cannot survive without its parasitism on the peasantry, is the need to analyze the concrete forces germinating within the city—trade unions had been organized, the petty bourgeoisie intellectuals had grown in alliance with the proletariat. These developments rendered obsolete the artist's quest for an ideal synthesis of the European city in an Asian setting, given the formation of a comprador merchant class and with it the seeds of national and class solidarity between the workers in the city and the peasants in the rural hinterlands. But for a few years, especially the first two decades of American domination, Filipino writers ignored the peasants as potential revolutionary allies and concentrated on the plight of the city worker.

Except for the untypical aestheticist cataloguing of local colour in such works as *Ninay* (1885) of Padro Paterno, we can sum up by saying that the city for the Filipino writer in the nineteenth century signified the locus of power, the unifying metaphor that shortcircuits the infinite substitutions of instinct and desire. When the United States supplanted Spain as the metropolitan power in 1898, the city ceased to be the goal of the revolutionary forces—or what was left of it after General Aguinaldo, the Republic's President, surrendered—and was converted into the arena of working class struggles as they coincided with the ideological resistance of seditious playwrights like Aurelio Tolentino, Severino Reyes, etc. But it was in the novels of Faustino Aguilar (*Pinaglahuan*,

1907) and Lope K. Santos (*Banaag at Silat*, 1906) that the city recovers its metonymic potential, that is, its function of establishing those intricate mediations between private or psychic obsessions and the imperatives of class struggle.

From the Twenties to the Forties, when Filipino writers strove to wield English as an expressive medium, the city loomed as a felt absence, an unknown integer whose plural significations coexisted with all the empty longings, disillusionments, resignations of peasants and young people in love trapped in villages and farms. Examples of this genre range from Jose Garcia Villa's *Footnote to Youth*, Paz Marquez Benitez's "Dead Stars", Delfin Fresnosa's "Tragedy at Lumba's Bend" and Juan Laya's novel *His Native Soil*. The trend is broken by Narciso Reyes's "Tinubuang Lupa" (Native Land, 1943) where the retreat from the city occupied by Japanese invaders brings about a rediscovery of authentic national identity through contact with the soil, folk customs, organic impulse, etc.¹⁴

Only in three writers—Arturo Rotor, Hernando Ocampo, Manuel Arguilla—do we find the realistic transcript of city experience treated as a means of projecting the totality of social life which has been hidden, occluded or suppressed in the immediacy of pure feelings or abstract notions. Rotor remains the only Filipino writer in English who has seriously described the lives of prisoners (see, for example, "Convict's Twilight") as a critical mirror of the whole society, an antithetical image to the predatory individualism of the city.¹⁵ In contrast, the elegiac celebration of urban pathos, the pathos of workers' lives circumscribed by physical need, scarcity and exploitation, found expression in the stories of Hernando Ocampo (for example, "We or They"), and continued in the postwar stories of Serafin Guinigundo, Andres Cristobal Cruz, D. Paulo Dizon, Teodoro Agoncillo and the generation associated with KADIPAN, an organization of Tagalog writers in the universities.¹⁶ For his part, Arguilla attempted to explode the profit-centred milieu of the city by a relentless diagnosis of the panicked sensibilities of petty bourgeois characters fighting to survive and maintain their dignity (see his "Caps and Lower Case").¹⁷ Arguilla's 1940 collection of stories *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife and Other Stories* signalled the exhaustion of the pastoralizing trend in Philippine writing; and heralded

the advent of a cosmopolitan openness on the eve of the Japanese occupation of Manila. Such a decisive event, like the British capture of Manila in the eighteenth century, released energies directed to the revival of Tagalog as the viable medium of expression and communication. On the other hand, the destruction of Manila by Japanese dynamite and United States bombs precipitated its crystallization into myth precisely because of its loss.

The single Filipino author who has elevated the city of Manila into archetypal stature is Nick Joaquin.

In his famous essay "La Naval de Manila" (1943), Joaquin asserted that "the basic form, the temper, the physiognomy" of the Filipino nation was created by Spanish colonial tyranny, not by the people's struggle for liberation. And it is Christianity, its doctrine of free will, that freed us from pagan custom and taboo, "the tight fixed web of tribal obedience". The Spanish legacy is embodied in Manila whose patron saint, the Holy Virgin of the Rosary, is responsible for miraculously saving the city in 1646 from the clutches of Dutch Protestant heresy. The city preserves "the prime work of Christianity", namely, "the awakening of the self, this release and expansion of the consciousness".¹⁸ The city then symbolizes Christian freedom emblemized by the annual celebration of "La Naval de Manila", a religious procession in honour of the Virgin. Without this devotion to the Virgin, Joaquin alleges, Filipinos will not possess "a sense of infinity", of "being at home in history".

Together with the feast for the Virgin, Intramuros or the Walled City represents, for Joaquin, a standard to measure and judge the quality of modern progress. The choral narrator of Joaquin's play *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* apostrophizes Manila as the antedeluvian, paradisaal origin before the Fall :

Intramuros ! The old Manila, The original Manila. The Noble and Ever Loyal City...

To the early conquistadores she was a new Tyre and Sidon ; to the early missionaries she was a New Rome. Within these walls was gathered the wealth of the Orient—silk from China ; spices from Java ; gold and ivory and precious stones from India. And within these walls the Champions of Christ assembled to conquer the Orient for the Cross. Through these old streets once crowded a marvelous multitude—viceroys and archbishops ; mystics and merchants ; pagan sorcerers and Christian

martyrs ; nuns and harlots and elegant marquesas ; English pirates, Chinese mandarins, Portuguese traitors, Dutch spies, Moro sultans, and Yankee clipper captains. For three centuries this medieval town was a Babylon in its commerce and a new Jerusalem in its faith.... This is the Calle Real—the main street of the city, the main street of the land, the main street of our history. Through this street the viceroys made their formal entry into the city. And on this street the principal families had their town houses—splendid ancient structures with red-tiled roofs and wrought-iron balconies and fountains playing in the interior patios....¹⁹

The house of Don Lorenzo Marasigan (and it is the house which defines time and space, interpellating subjects to take up their positions in society) where survivors of the 1896 revolution gathered every year to watch the Naval procession, functions as 'the conscience' of the city, upholding traditional civic virtues against commodity-fetishism and the reified exchanges of the market. World War II destroys the house so that, with the influx of displaced rural folk into the city, it is left to the artist (personified by Bitoy) to preserve the city now only as a trope of the imagination :

It is gone now—that house...It finally took a global war to destroy this house and the three people who fought for it.... They died with their house and they died with their city—and maybe it's just as well they did. They could never have survived the death of the old Manila. And yet—listen !—it is not dead ; it has not perished !...Your city—my city—the city of our father—still lives ! Something of it is left ; something of it survives, and will survive, as long as I live and remember—I who have known and loved and cherished these things ! (He stoops down on one knee and makes a gesture of scooping earth.)

Oh Paula, Candida—listen to me ! By your dust and by the dust of all the generations, I promise to continue, I promise to preserve ! The jungle may advance, the bombs may fall again—but while I live, you live—and this dear city of our affections shall rise again—if only in my song !²⁰

With allusive eloquence, Joaquin is endeavouring to recapitulate in his art the Platonic evocation of the ancient city, implicitly invoking Legaspi's founding act of fusing the King's secular power and the priest's divine-magical wisdom, the military machine and religious mythology. Lewis Mumford reminds us of this utopian function of the city in history :

... as Fustel de Coulanges and Bachofen pointed out a century ago, the city was primarily a religious phenomenon ; it was the home of a god,

and even the city wall points to this super-human origin ; for Mircea Eliade is probably correct in inferring that its primary function was to hold chaos at bay and ward off inimical spirits. This cosmic orientation, these mythic-religious claims, this royal preemption of the powers and functions of the community are what transformed the mere village or town into a city: something 'out of this world', the home of a god.... The city itself was transmogrified into an ideal form—a glimpse of eternal order, a visible heaven on earth, a seat of the life abundant—in other words, utopia.²¹

What I suggested earlier as a binary opposition between the city and the countryside may serve to organize my comment here on Joaquin's novella "The Woman Who Had Two Navels". The chief protagonist, Paco Texeira, born and bred in Macao and Hong Kong where East and West interpenetrate, succumbs to the spell of post-war Manila residents Doña Concha Vidal and her daughter. Manila serves the twin function of metaphoric vehicle for reconciling contradictions, or alternatively, a synchronic device to advance Paco's quest for self-fulfilment. I quote the beginning of a long passage to illustrate this point :

By the time he met the Señora de Vidal he had become deeply interested in Manila and was ready to be interested in any woman who most piquantly suggested that combination of primitive mysticism and slick modernity which he felt to be the special temper of the city and its people : pert girls dancing with abandon all night long in the cabarets and fleeing in black veils to hear the first Mass at dawn, boys in the latest loudest Hollywood styles, with American slang in their mouths and the crucifix on their breasts ; streets ornate with movie palaces and jammed with traffic through which leaf-crowned and barefooted penitents carried a Black Christ in procession—and always, up there above the crowds and hot dust and skeleton ruins and gay cabarets : the mountains, and the woman sleeping in a silence mighty with myth and mystery—for she was the ancient goddess of the land (said the people) sleeping out the thousand years of bondage ; but when at last she awoke, it would be a Golden Age again for the land : no more suffering ; no more toil ; no rich and no poor.²²

Joaquin's later stories, like "Candide's Apocalypse" in which the pressures of urban middle-class upmanship are registered in the main character's adolescent revolt against adult norms, and particularly "The Order of Melkizedek", Joaquin's prophetic or utopian impulse drives him to incorporate the primal, mythical impulses of the countryside into his vision of a resurrected Manila.

In stories like "Guardia de Honor", "May Day Eve" and "Summer Solstice", the city occupies the foreground as an actor or protagonist in a drama of cross-purposes and epiphanic reversals. Manila seems to approximate Henri Lefebvre's notion of the rediscovery of the Festival, though in another context.²³ Custom and tradition channel erotic drives into ritual and ceremony inseparable from the city's corporative life: "In October, a breath of the north stirs Manila, blowing summer's dust and doves from the tile roofs, freshening the moss of old walls, as the city festoons itself with arches and paper lanterns for its great votive feast to the Virgin."²⁴ While the city, in "May Day Eve", presents family tradition and memory as agencies resolving the characters' moral predicaments, in "Summer Solstice", Joaquin contraposes to the patriarchal order of the Walled City the feminine aspect of the countryside, in this case the Paco suburb of 1850 where the primitive rite of the Tadtarin centred on a fertility cult of a Mother Goddess restores in a dramatic moment the pre-Spanish ascendancy of women in society. At this point, one may note how this centrifugal movement to the outskirts of the Walled City symptomatically betrays the cracks and fissures in Joaquin's myth.

Both the allusion to the female profile of the mountains in "The Woman Who Had Two Navels" and the resuscitation of the fertility goddess in "Summer Solstice" can be interpreted as Joaquin's unconscious attempt to exorcise the negative, the contradictory force opposing the patriarchal city, instead of being read as an indictment of the myth and an affirmation of the primitive. We can see Joaquin confronting the historical contradictions already grasped by the author of *La Loba Negra*, by Balagtas and Rizal, but his way of resolving such contradictions proceeds by an effort to absorb and institutionalize the irrational, the repressed. In "The Order of Melkizedek", the sectarian movement trying to revive a pre-Christian cult of a fertility god uses as headquarters an old nunnery in the Walled City. Joaquin's point of view Sid Estiva, absent from Manila for ten years, sketches the decline of the city, the loss of homogeneity and cohesion:

This was, thought Sid, jolting through downtown, a Manila his backside did not recall. If I closed my eyes, this could be the dirt road to a childhood summer in the provinces. But how shut eyes as agape now as then

at the primitive? Rizal's image of the city as a frail girl wearing her grandmother's finery no longer fitted; this was a dirty old broad got up all wrong in a yé-yé girl's clothes. The old city walls that came into view across the soiled air and a bridgeful of chaos astonished with their look of calm and dignity.²⁵

This montage or juxtaposition of temporal layers, a metaphoric substitution as static as Ezra Pound's ideogrammic style, informs the thematic layout of Joaquin's other stories—"A Pilgrim Yankee's Progress", "The Mass of St. Sylvester", "Three Generations", etc.—and though the city unfolds a thick, multi-layered grid of contradictions, the glory of its past affords a mystifying and transcendental mechanism to obscure and cancel those real-life conflicts, tensions, antagonisms. The War constitutes a turning-point when the city as a metaphor for Jerusalem disappears, buried by the acute sense of time as a process of cyclic unfolding or a quasi-allegorical spiral where periodic climaxes of self-discovery serve merely to reinforce familial and clan pieties. It might not be altogether premature to conclude here that Joaquin conceives of the Filipino experience as so many varied permutations on the historic predicaments and moral crisis that transpired in the Walled City of Intramuros, but this time, spatially, the stage has moved to the plush, gentrified suburbia of MetroManila once inhabited by farmers with carabaos and wooden ploughs. For all his subtle skill in deploying time-shifts and loops in his narrative sequence, Joaquin could not insert in his text the reality of what today Intramuros contains: the monumental headquarters of United States transnational corporations—the totality of global monopoly capitalism.

Myth and metaphor could not survive the literal annihilation of its support; reduced to ruins, Manila becomes dispersed in a constellation of gratuitous images signifying alienation. Manuel Viray's poem "Elegies", for example, fashions a montage of impressions laid out in metonymic sequence. "The past is a scar," descants the poet in an unwitting riposte to Joaquin: "Here in the hard city block summer/Brings rank smell of estero and your smile...."²⁶ Another postwar poet, Amado Unite engages in a similar rendering of the city as an epitome of what Lukács termed "reification", the reduction of human relationships to the mechanical connection between things:

Not one window now may mend
My manhood my house by the street

Of slow and rapid transit and
 No door define or divide me
 A secret and definite geography.
 Yet they hand a blue anomaly between
 My waking and the oblique day.
 I can not fly them, house or manhood,
 In the dead and dessicated city.
 ("Manhood in a House in Cabildo")²⁷

Occupied by the Japanese military forces on 2 January 1942 and relinquished by them reluctantly in February 1945 not without fierce hand-to-hand combat, Manila was wiped out by both the enemy's incendiary and the liberator's bombs. Next to Warsaw, Poland, it was the most gutted and devastated city of the war. Millions suffered atrocities, tens of thousands were killed in Intramuros. Under the stress of utter privations during the war years sprung a solidarity hitherto absent in the Darwinian milieu depicted by Arguilla and Ocampo in the Thirties, a communal unity vividly captured by Amado V. Hernandez in his article "Pasko ng 1944 at Iba pang Mga Araw" ("Christmas of 1944 and Other Days"). I translate his original Tagalog²⁸ :

More than at any other time, the old walls that divided the citizens, walls of three levels and classes obtaining in pre-war Manila, collapsed under the force of circumstances. In the ordeals of misery suffered by the majority, and amid hovering perils, the owners of property were forced to step down on bare earth and mix with the ordinary people. In those days, quite unexpectedly, the power which money and material possessions commanded faded away....

This levelling of status, however, concealed within it the sharpening of class dissensions, as shown in Hernandez's epic chronicle of the war *Bayang Malaya (Liberated Country, 1969)* where villages under guerrilla control displaced Manila as the organized reservoir of energies, wills, dreams. In his earthy notations of city life, exuberant market scenes and comic-farcical festivities particularly in slum areas like Tondo (a radical shift in spatial and aesthetic orientation in contrast to Jouquin), Hernandez reaffirms the self-renewing folk energies and dynamic futurism of the plebeian and proletarian majority which, in Mikhail Bakhtin's cogent commentary, informs the fantastic urban allegories of Rabelais.²⁹

Hernandez's militant empathy for the under-privileged, the outcasts and victims of class exploitation, defined the aesthetic and moral sensibility of a whole generation of writers in the Sixties and Seventies: for example, Luis Teodoro, Jose Lacaba, Bienvenido Lumbera, etc. Manila, in these writers' conceptions, displayed itself as the microcosm of the class-divided social totality in which personal compulsions coalesced into collective responses, but in the same breath these committed writers located within it those recalcitrant and disruptive forces that challenged the hegemony of the dominant elite who owned the material structures in the city, who controlled not just the physical artifacts but also the psychic patterns of life. In Hernandez's novel *Mga Ibong Mandaragit* (*Birds of Prey*, 1969), and stories like "Langaw Sa Isang Basong Gatas" ("A Fly on a Glass of Milk") and "Ipinanganak ang Isang Kaaway ng Sosyedad" ("An Enemy of Society is Born"), and his prison poems in *Isang Dipang Langit* (*A Breastful of Sky*, 1962), the decentring of the city as the goal and object of the struggle unfolds, culminating in the dispossession of squatters from their ancestral land as private urban housing encroaches. This topographical fusion of individual predicaments and the hidden mechanisms of capital investment and extraction of surplus-value in Hernandez's art eclipses the banality of petty bourgeois opportunism recorded in the superficially urbane fiction of Kerima Polotan-Tuvera and Gilda Cordero-Fernando, proving once more that the significance of the city in literature inheres in its metonymic, temporal dimension.

Before concluding, I would like at this point to explain why Manila is the only Philippine city that has preoccupied Filipino writers, in addition to what I have already said. The empirical evidence insists on the following: the Manila urban complex is today the country's most populous and most industrialized region. As the prime market and manufacturing centre of an archipelago of 7,000 islands, it has experienced far greater growth in the last three decades than the whole nation in terms of population and purchasing power. Two-fifths of more than 11,000 large-scale manufacturing establishments are found in the Manila area; they employ more than half of the total work force, and about two-thirds of all women workers.⁹⁰ As distribution centre, Manila's foreign trade surpasses in value that of all the other ports of entry combined. With the huge amount and variety of managerial talents, the abundant supply of diverse skilled

labour ; with the terminus of transportation lines located there, Manila as a conurbation of over six million (compare the 1939 population of 623, 493) easily functions as the administrative, educational, financial, cultural and commercial centre of the nation.' Formed not by the industrial revolution but by colonization and imperialist annexation, Manila as the primate city—the most westernized in monsoon Asia, according to one geographer—has preempted other sites in the Filipino imagination in its dual role of centralizing, paradigmatic authority and as interlinking, syntagmatic influence.

In the Seventies up to January 1981, the crisis of Western hegemony over the Third World reached a critical stage in the victory of the Indo-Chinese people's war against imperialist aggression and in the upsurge of popular resistance from Iran to Zimbabwe and Nicaragua. In most of these underdeveloped regions, the theory and practice of protracted people's war, first formulated and applied by Mao Zedong in China, spelled the doom of the neocolonial cities by the revenge of the countryside, and by analogy the overthrow of the metropolitan power preying on these cities. For the Philippines, the strategy was proposed by Amado Guerrero in his epochal work *Philippine Society and Revolution* (1971) :

Chairman Mao's strategic principle of encircling the cities from the countryside should be assiduously implemented. It is in the countryside where the enemy can be compelled to spread his forces thinly and lured into areas where the initiative is completely in our hands. In the countryside, we can develop several fighting fronts, ranging in quality from guerilla zones to base areas. We can turn the most backward areas in the countryside into the most advanced political, military, economic, and cultural bastions of the revolution. We can create the armed independent regime in the countryside even before defeating the enemy in the cities.

What underlies this perspective is the key principle of uneven development of the social structure whose articulation in literature oscillates between metaphoric and metonymic tracks.

In the late Sixties and early Seventies, the idea of the city as an immense prison (a mutation of the image of the besieged Intramuros, and later of Fort Santiago where the national hero Rizal was held before his execution and where thousands of guerillas were tortured and murdered by the Japanese) informed the writings of political prisoners like Edgar Maranan, Jose Maria Sison, Father Ed de la

Torre, etc. Before martial law was imposed in 1972 and converted Manila into a militarized bunker, the city's atmosphere as an anarchic jungle where each pedestrian resembles a rabid wolf stalking the streets pervaded the works of Rogelio Mangahas, Lamberto Antonio, Ricardo Lee and others. This mood and motif attained melodramatic scenario in Edgardo Reyes's novel *Sa Mga Kuko ng Liwanag* (*In the Claws of Light*, 1966), replicating the recurrent romantic theme of chaste women from the villages lured and raped in the city and the naive, trusting youth from the province driven to roam the alleys like a beast with fangs bared.³² We thus recapitulate here the moment in *La Loba Negra* where, metonymically, the contagion of violence and corruption in Intramuros engenders the fierce black She-Wolf, the precursor of Joaquin's iconoclastic heroines, encircling the city from the countryside.

In the late Seventies, Manila continued to suck in the uprooted and dislocated masses totalling forty-nine million. This entailed a tremendous acceleration of density (particularly in slums where over two million people live and two thousand persons occupy a hectare of 2.47 acres) and exhaustion of resources. According to 1977 World Bank statistics, 39 percent of families (90 percent of slumdwellers) in Manila subsist below the poverty threshold of \$250 per person.³³ Under the Marcos dictatorship, where profits from export-industries determine priorities, the policy of maintaining a steady supply of cheap labour by uprooting and dislocating millions of peasants guarantees the perpetuation of the vast slum areas. One can speculate that this invasion of the city may be deemed a mock-rehearsal of the encirclement strategy. But there is more than a rhetorical nuance to this sociohistorical upheaval, for historically the authoritarian regime of the ancient city based on its military machine was limited and "passively challenged by the archaic, democratic, life-conserving village culture that has always embraced the larger part of mankind."³⁴

Should we then abolish the city, as Blake, Thoreau, William Morris and others have argued? Or should we capture it?

Filipino partisans of the progressive imagination reply: When the producers and creators of social wealth have begun to mobilize their transforming powers, even as the writers are remoulding their consciousness and linguistic practice, the city will finally lose its privileged position as a machine welded and directed by a parasitic

minority, an oligarchic elite subservient to transnational corporate interests, and eventually become a hospitable and fertile milieu for human reason and desire. By then, the city as the primordial symbol of a lost metaphysical plenitude will disappear, yielded to the city as the metonymy or narrative of a self-renewing praxis in which the objective, dynamic and sensuous world—the raw material and product of collective action—will provide the conditions for abolishing the historic demarcation between city and countryside, the outcome of social development from feudalism to capitalism. This revolutionary praxis will resolve the contradiction between intellectual and manual labour, allowing the imagination its playful transcendence over nature in a process by which the city metamorphoses into its Other, the garden of worldly pleasures. One poetic evocation of this dialectical promise is this lyric by Clarita Roja, a Marxist-Leninist woman intellectual in the underground resistance today, with which I provisionally conclude this discourse :

PALL HANGING OVER MANILA

As the boat glides slowly
 Portward
 Carrying still the fresh winds
 From sea and countryside
 One can see the pall hanging over Manila,
 City of one's birth,
 One's most fevered child.
 The dissonance of cars bustling to and fro
 Greets ears used now to the silence of cicadas
 Chirping warmly from cool treetops—
 And later the gray smirking faces lined up
 In jeeps reeking of sweat
 And soot-laden collars.

Oh the pall that hangs over Manila,
 City of my birth to violence,
 My most fevered child !
 On a hilltop at night
 Far from the smokestacks belching
 The dull black of exploitation
 I watch her, bejeweled now
 With varicolored gems of light
 Moving seeming slow from a distance.

She lies,
 Hard Black stone inlaid
 With clusters of gold and diamonds and rubies,
 Hiding the many sins lurking behind
 Esteros and seedy bars,
 Knowing yet unthinking
 Of the unfathomable grief she causes,
 Grief causing lonely acts
 Lonely acts pushing onward
 A hungry desperate people.

Manila : metropolis mushrooming
 Not out of any dream
 But the sweat of millions
 On steel-hot machines
 And the toil of millions more
 On placid-fertile greens.

NOTES

1 See Roman Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances" in R. Jakobson and M. Halle, *Fundamentals of Language* (The Hague, 1956), pp. 55-82. For metonymic/metaphoric transformations in society, see Edmund Leach, *Culture and Communication* (New York, 1976), *passim*.

2 Nicholas P. Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines* (Quezon City, 1971), p. 67. Cushner draws from eyewitness accounts.

3 Based on a typed proposal sent to me by the author.

4 Renato Constantino, *The Philippines : A Past Revisited* (Quezon City, 1975), pp. 54-56; Teodoro Agoncillo and Mila Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People* (Quezon City, 1970), pp. 79-80.

5 Cristobal's piece is in *Sinaglahi*, ed. M.L. Santaromana (Manila, 1975), pp. 210-19. Contrast Joaquin's reductive technologism expounded in "History as Culture", *The Manila Review*, 11 (June 1977), pp. 22-68.

6 *La Loba Negra*, ed. Teodoro Agoncillo (Quezon City, 1970), pp. 2-3.

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46. See my introduction to this work.

8 See my English rendering of Balagtas' poem: *Balagtas Florante/Laura* (Manila, 1977); and my commentary on it: *Art and Revolution* (Quezon City, 1969). Writing in 1851, Melville took occasion to stereotype Filipinos by association with the city, referring in Chapter XLVIII of *Moby Dick* to "the aboriginal natives of the Manillas;—a race notorious for a certain diabolism of subtility, and by some honest white mariners supposed to be the paid spies and secret confidential agents on the water of the devil, their Lord."

9 Rizal, *The Lost Eden (Noli Me Tangere)*, tr. Leon Guerrero (New York, 1961), n. 21.

- 10 "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire", *Illuminations* (New York, 1969), pp. 199-200. Cf. Georg Simmel's thought on urbanism as summarized in *Essays on Sociology, Philosophy & Aesthetics* by Georg Simmel, ed. K. Wolff (New York, 1950), pp. 230-32.
- 11 Rizal, p. 44.
- 12 *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.
- 13 Rizal, *The Subversive (El Filibusterismo)*, tr. L. Guerrero (New York, 1962), p. 194.
- 14 The stories cited are found in Leopoldo Yabes, ed. *Philippine Short Stories 1925-1940* (Quezon City, 1976), and also in E. San Juan, Jr., ed., *Introduction to Modern Pilipino Literature* (New York, 1974).
- 15 Yabes, pp. 298-308. See Rotor's collection, *The Wound and the Scar* (Manila, 1937).
- 16 See their stories in the following collections: Teodoro Agoncillo, *Ang Maikling Kuwentong Tagalog (1886-1948)* (Quezon City, 1949); Alejandro Abadilla, et al., eds., *Ang Maikling Kathang Tagalog* (Quezon City, 1954); Alejandro Abadilla and P.B. Pineda, *Maikling Katha ng 20 Pangunahing Awtor* (Manila, 1957); Domingo Landicho, *Manwal sa Pagsulat ng Maikling Kuwento sa Pilipino* (Quezon city, 1974).
- 17 Arguilla, *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife and Other Stories* (March 1940), pp. 175-99.
- 18 Nick Joaquin, *La Naval de Manila* (Manila, 1964), p. 32. But compare Joaquin's ideas in *A Question of Heroes* (Manila, 1977) and his relatively recent attitudes found in his numerous journalistic pieces, among them *Manila: Sin City?* (Manila, 1980).
- 19 Leonard Casper, *New Writing from the Philippines* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1966), p. 312.
- 20 *Ibid.*, pp. 381-82.
- 21 "Utopia, the City and The Machine", in *Utopias and Utopian Thought*, ed. Frank P. Manuel (Boston, 1967), p. 13. See also Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London, 1973).
- 22 Nick Joaquin, *Tropical Gothic* (Queensland, 1972), p. 174.
- 23 *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (New York, 1971), pp. 205-06.
- 24 Joaquin, p. 123.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 219. For other stories of Joaquin I cite, see his first collection, *Prose and Poems* (Manila, reissue 1963). For a brief treatment of Intramuros in Philippine literature, see Petronilo Daroy, "Intramuros in the Imagination of the Filipino Writer", *The Manila Review* 4 (1975), pp. 36-39.
- 26 T.D. Agoncillo, ed. *Philippine Writing: An Anthology* (Manila 1953, reissue 1971), p. 314.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 309.
- 28 *Panata sa Kalayaan at Ka-Amado*, ed. Andres Cruz (Manila, 1970), p. 188.
- 29 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968). Contrast the treatment of the city by American writers as discussed by David Welner, *The City as Metaphor* (New York, 1966).
- 30 Alden Cuthall, *The Philippines: Nation of Islands* (Princeton, N.J., 1964), p. 74. Also Frederick L. Wernstedt and Joseph Spencer, *The Philippine Island World* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967), pp. 142, 276-78.

31 Guerrero, *Philippine Society and Revolution* (Hong Kong, 1971), pp. 282-83.

32 Edgardo Reyes, *Sa Mga Kuko ng Liwanag* (Manila, 1966), p. 54. For the other writers I cite, see : Rogelio Mangahas, ed., *Manlilikha* (Manila, 1967) ; Federico Licsi Espino, Jr., ed., *New Poems in Pilipino* (Manila, 1975) ; E. San Juan, Jr., ed., *Makibaka : Revolutionary Writing from the Philippines* (Conn., 1975) ; Resource Center for Philippine Concerns, *Pintig* (Hong Kong, 1979) ; Alliance for Philippine National Democracy, *Jose Maria Sison : Filipino Revolutionary Fighter* (Conn., 1980).

33 *Christian Science Monitor* (18 September 1980), p. 836.

34 Manuel, pp. 19-20. For a historical view of the city (which draws from Lewis Mumford's classic *The City in History*) and an account of U.S. cities today, see Ernest Harsch, "Cities in Decay", *Life in Capitalist America*, ed. S. Coontz and C. Frank (New York, 1975), pp. 13-68.

The most suggestive dialectical presentation of the problematics of city life that I have found in my research is Friedrich Engels' *The Housing Question* (Moscow, 1970).

TERMS FOR THE MEDIEVAL INDIAN LONG VERSE FORMS

Sisir Kumar Das

I

Although some of the Indian languages made a terminological distinction between short and long verses (e.g. *laghu kṛti* and *dirgha kṛti* in Telugu), none had a term covering all types of narrative poems in the language. They had different names for different types of verses distinguished by their themes, mood and occasionally metres employed in them. Tamil made a distinction between two kinds of poetry : *ṭokai nilai* (collected ones) and *toṭar nilai* (continued ones), the former an anthology of unconnected verses by one or many authors, and the latter consisting of connected verses.¹ Such a distinction might appear superfluous, if not irrelevant, to the modern critic, as anthologies can hardly be considered to be a form of verse. This distinction, however, was not altogether unnecessary for the reader/listeners of medieval poetry who often treated such collections as a single unit, rather than as a series of unconnected verses, each to be read and sung without any reference to the other. The rationale behind such classification, one can presume, was to emphasize the point that *ṭokai nilai*, though unconnected, could have a unity of impression or mood. Although such distinctions were not made or strictly enforced in other Indian languages, none the less they were totally irrelevant. Hindi, to give an example at random, had a form of poetry known as *satsai*. As the name indicates, it is a form consisting of seven hundred verses (and quite often the number exceeded the limit of seven hundred) in the same metre. Bihari, a seventeenth century poet, wrote a *satsai*—the most famous of this type of poem in Hindi—which describes different types of heroes and heroines, and figures of speech, and also enumerates the features of poetic diction. These verses are not connected by any narrative

element, nor by any particular argument. Yet a continuity in the discourse can be found there despite the fact that each verse can be enjoyed independently.² Like the Hindi *satsais*, Telugu and Kannada literatures had a tradition of *śataka* (century).³ It was an extremely popular form in the Telugu-speaking area in particular, and some of the celebrated works of Telugu literature are *śatakas*, a collection of one hundred verses. In many cases, these verses, though independent of one another, were woven together by a linguistic device. Each one of the verses, writes G.V. Sitapati explaining the device, should have “a common word or words—generally a proper noun in the vocative case in the last line, usually at the end of it—and a *śataka* is named after the common word or words. In *Bhuvānī Śatakam*, the last word of the fourth line in each is *Bhuvānī*.... In *Śiva Śatakam* the last word of the fourth line of each verse is *Śiva*.”⁴ The same device is used in Kannada with a slight modification, where the fourth line of each verse is identical. *Someśvara Śataka*, to cite another example, has the phrase *hara hara Śrīcanna Someśvara* as the fourth line of all the hundred verses.

The sequence of short verses, as it is found in Tulsi's *Vinaya Patrikā*, or in the *Sursāgar* of Surdas which is divided into several sections entitled *līlā* (e.g. *Vāl Līlā*, *Vṛndāvan Līlā* etc.), or in various *pālās* in Bengali, can also be considered, along with *pillaittamil*⁵, a popular and productive genre in Tamil literature, as that kind of poetry where length is contrived by various devices. The *kīrtana ghoṣā*⁶ of Assamese literature can also be included in this category as these short poems acquire length by repetition. They are generally based on purāṇic stories and while presented before the public, the same stanza of the poems is sung again and again. This method of lengthening was extremely meaningful to the listeners of poetry in the medieval period.

Despite these techniques of ‘lengthening’ short verses or of weaving a sequence of short verses, they cannot be called ‘long poems’, their length being more contrived than real. But this is an interesting and significant feature of medieval Indian literature as distinct from that of the ancient and the modern.

II

Among the general terms designating the various types of narrative

verse in the medieval period, the most important is, perhaps, *prabandha*, a Sanskrit word and a classical literary term. Although in Sanskrit it meant a type of poetic structure distinguished by a controlled diction and rigid metres as well as by certain thematic specifications, in the medieval period it began to be used with less rigour. The Tamil classification of *totarnilai* (all narrative and descriptive poetry) into (i) *kappiyam* (epics) and *purāṇam*, and (ii) *prabandhas* or *pirantam* which are of ninety-six varieties, shows that all types of poetic compositions other than epics and *purāṇas* were considered as *prabandhas*. In Malayalam, the term *prabandha* generally meant the *campus* which were defined as *gadyapadyamayam kāvyaṃ* (a composition both in prose and verse), and occasionally the purāṇic poems e.g. *Matsyāvatāraprabandha* by Narayana Bhatta. Telugu, however, insisted on a more rigorous standard. Sitapati mentions a required number of features, such as "the opening verses of invocation addressed to the Supreme, to the family gods and to the gurus, tribute to the previous poets for inspiration, censure of bad poets, to indicate the undesirable features which the author would guard against, announcement of the dedication to a deity or guru or patron, a brief description of the genealogy of the recipient of the dedication as well as of the author..." etc." It should also contain descriptions of eighteen items such as the seasons, rivers, lakes, mountains, forests, sun, moon, marriage, births, battles etc. It may also contain a *garbha kavita* (a verse form parts of which are written in different metres) or a *bandha kavita* (a verse form in which letters can be arranged to assume the shape of a coiled cobra, a cart-wheel, a sword or an umbrella).¹⁰

These are, however, the external features of a *prabandha*. According to D. Venkatavadhini, the word attained a new meaning in Telugu from the sixteenth century when the poets patronized by the king Krishnadevaraya experimented with this form quite assiduously.¹¹ Allasani Peddana's *Manucarita*, which became a model for the later poets of *prabandhas*, indicates that the theme of a *prabandha* must be taken either from the *purāṇas* or from the epics, and the main sentiment (*rasa*) should be erotic/love (*śṛṅgāra*) and the hero should be *dhīrodātta*. The *prabandhas* written in this period also show that they were a combination of the characteristics of the Sanskrit *padyakāvya*s (verse narratives), *campu-kāvya*s (narratives written in both prose and verse) and *nāṭakas* (plays) as well.

In Gujarati, on the other hand, a *prabandha* meant a historical or biographical poem. At the initial stage of its development it included compositions based on historical incidents, interspersed with Sanskrit prose and Apabhramsa verse. The *Prabandha-Cintāmaṇi* (1305) of Merutungacarya and the *Caturviṃśati Prabandha* (1349) of Rajasekhara are examples of this type. From the fifteenth century, however, the terms *rāsa* and *prabandha* became almost synonymous. In works like *Vimala Prabandha* by Lavanyasamaya and *Rūpacāṇḍa Kumār Rāsa* by Nayasundara, the authors themselves have described their poems as *prabandha* and *rāsa* respectively. This indicates very clearly that the distinction between the two terms slowly collapsed in the fifteenth century, and narrative poems of various kinds, historical, allegorical and religious, came to be known as *prabandhas*.¹¹ In Bengali the word has been often used in the sense of a pattern or structure e.g. *payāra-prabandha* (in the structure of *payār*) or *pācālī-prabandha* (in the structure of *pācālī*). Yadumani Mahapatra's Oriya poem *Prabandha Pūrṇacandra*, a narrative describing the marriage of Kṛṣṇa with Rukmiṇī, has been called a *prabandha*, probably because of its ornate style and verbal ingenuity. The manner in which the term *prabandha* is used in Hindi covers a wide area and can include narrative poems of different types. The biographical poems (*carit kāvya*s) are included in this category. The *Hindī Sāhitya Koṣa* suggests by implication that the *mahākāvya*s and the *khaṇḍakāvya*s too can be described as *prabandhas*.¹²

The most widely distributed term for a long verse form in the medieval period is *purāṇ[a]*. This term is derived from Sanskrit and means 'ancient legends'. For all practical purposes it meant a class of religious writings consisting of tales about gods and goddesses in the Hindu pantheon. These poems deal with cosmogony, the genealogies of kings belonging to mythical races and moral discourses. There are eighteen major *purāṇas*, all ascribed to Vyāsa, distinguished by modes of arrangements. Apart from these eighteen *purāṇas*, most of them extolling the glory of Viṣṇu and some of Śiva, there are works of similar nature known as *upa-purāṇas* (secondary *purāṇas*). Most of the *purāṇas*, if not all, were translated into various modern languages. But in the course of time the term *purāṇa* began to be used for many other writings, which have no relation with the Sanskrit *purāṇas*. Tamil provides an interesting case in respect of the extension of the meaning of this term.

Tamil recognized three types of *purāṇas*. The first type is the complete or partial renderings of the Sanskrit works of the same name. The second type is the hagiography and the third is the account of holy places. The second type i.e. the lives of saints, came to be known as *purāṇas* primarily because of the anxiousness of the biographers to lend a special status to their writings. In a sense the term was quite apposite, as these biographies were a mixture of facts and fantasies, myths and miracles, and differ radically from what is understood by a biography. The hagiography that grew in Tamil, and in the other languages of India, was either directed towards the apotheosization of the saints or was written when that process was almost complete. The biographers never cared to follow the principles of historical writings but followed deliberately the principles of the *purāṇas*.

Among the hagiographical *purāṇas* the most outstanding is the *Periya Purāṇam* (literally, the great *purāṇa*). This is a collection of the lives of Tamil Saiva poets and saints and was composed around the twelfth century when many of the saints had been apotheosized and legends about many others were busy flourishing. This tradition was continued in many later writers, the most eminent of whom were Umapati Sivacarya (the author of the fourteen *Śaiva Siddhānta* texts and several biographical *purāṇas*) who wrote the biographies of the saints Antar Nampi and Sekkilar in the fourteenth century, and Kata Vunmakamunivar, author of *Tiru Vātavūrupurāṇam* which deals with the life of the poet-saint Manikkavasakara in seven cantos, each canto consisting of 547 stanzas. All these works differ from modern biographical writings not only in their attitude and spirit, but in their formal features as well. In *Periya Purāṇam*, for example, one finds standardized descriptions of the saint's birth-place, education and predictable episodes leading to confrontations between the saint and the society, and the final intervention of the deity, Śiva, who makes the saint victorious.¹⁸

The term *purāṇa* in the sense of hagiography was not restricted to Tamil alone. Guna Varman, a poet of Karnataka, wrote a biography of Neminath, a Jain tirthankara, in the tenth century. It was known as *Nemināth Purāṇa*. Pampa's *Ādl Purāṇa* written in the tenth century is the life of the first tirthankara. Two contemporaries of Pampa, Poona and Ranna wrote *Śāntipurāṇa* and *Ālīpurāṇa* dealing with the legends of the sixteenth and the second tirthankara

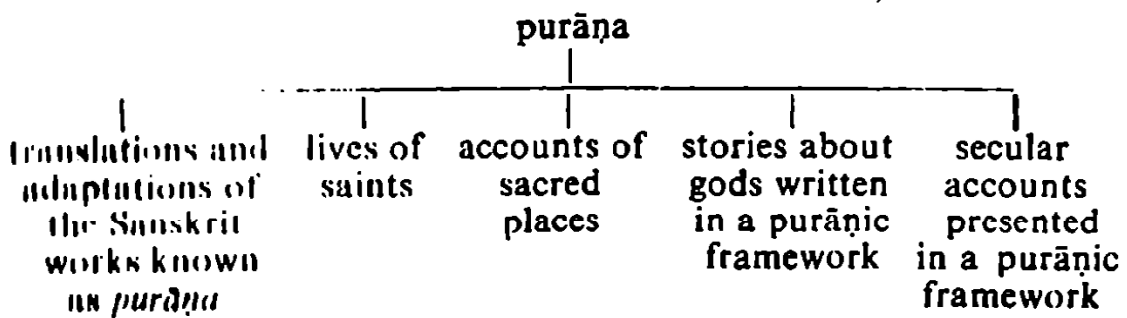
respectively. When Nagachandra (Abhinava Pampa) wrote his celebrated *Rāmāyaṇa* in the twelfth century it was entitled *Rāmacandra Caritrapurāṇa*. The practice was maintained by the Virasaivas as well. *Vāsavapurāṇa* (c. 1369) by Bhima Kavi in Kannada is based on Somanatha's *Vāsavapurāṇamu* written in Telugu. This shows that the term *purāṇa* was used both in Telugu and Kannada in the sense of hagiography. The term was later used in Marathi in the same sense, though only by the Christian writers. In 1616 Father Thomas Stephane wrote a long biographical poem on Christ, entitled *Khrīṣṭa Purāṇa* (life of Christ), and several Jesuits wrote lives of Christian saints, all of which were designated as *purāṇas*. It is interesting to note in this connection that the first Bengali biography of Chaitanya by Brindaban Das was named *Caitanya Bhāgavata*. The poet's intention to find a correspondence between the life of Kṛṣṇa as depicted in the *Bhāgavata*, which is one of the important *purāṇas*, and that of Chaitanya, is clearly manifested in the title. This can be cited as an instance of covert use of the term *purāṇa* for hagiography in Bengali.

The third category of the Tamil *purāṇas* is known as *talapurāṇa* (Sanskrit *sthalapurāṇa* i.e. 'place-histories'). To start with, these were generally collections of legends around temples. One of the earliest *talapurāṇa* is *Kōyilpurāṇam* by Umapati Sivacarya, written in the fourteenth century. This narrates the legends of the Chidambaram temple. Many of these *purāṇas* deal with the various sports (*līlā viḷaiyāṭal*) of gods, particularly those of Śiva, and thus, are attempts to build up a new literature with new themes presented within a purāṇic framework.

While Tamil used the term *purāṇa* for three distinct types of poetry, the term began to be used for other varieties of poetry in the other languages. In some languages, the term acquired a new dimension. In Oriya, from the sixteenth century onwards there emerged a rich crop of stories involving gods and goddesses, which had no connection with the Sanskrit *purāṇas*. Yet they came to be known as *purāṇas*. *Viṣṇugarbha Purāṇa* by Chaitanya Dasa, *Viṣṇukeśorī Purāṇa* by Mahadeva Dasa, or *Nṛsiṃha Purāṇa* by Pitambura Dasa are a few examples of this new type of *purāṇas*. The stories narrated in these works were not borrowed from the Sanskrit *purāṇas*, but they were either current among the people or were invented by the poets themselves. About *Nṛsiṃha Purāṇa*, Mayadhar Mansingha

assure that "there is nothing like this story in Sanskrit", and despite the title 'Nṛsimha', this has no relation with the story of Hiraṇyakuṣipu and Prahlād. It is a story of two brothers, Nṛsimha and Śeṇu, contesting for the hand of Lakṣmī, daughter of Varuṇa. Nṛsimha, an incarnation of Viṣṇu, finally wins Lakṣmī. The characters are purāṇic and so is the spirit of the poem, but the story is new. Some of the Oriya *purāṇas* can be described as imitations of the Sanskrit *purāṇas* with new episodic materials. Mayadhar Maṅglikha informs us that "battles, the relation between the sexes and the preaching of social ethics" are the main elements of Oriya *purāṇas*.¹⁴ This trend had spread over other parts of India as well and many religious narrative poems were designated as *purāṇas*. In Hindi one finds *Nirañjan Purāṇ* ascribed to Gorakhnath, a Nath saint. In Bengali titles like *Anilpurāṇ*, *Dharmapurāṇ*, *Padmāpurāṇ* are quite frequent. The most startling use of this word as the title of a historical narrative is to be found in Bengali. One Gangaram wrote a poem entitled *Mahārāṣṭrapurāṇ* (1750 ?) which gives an account of the raids of the Bargirs in Bengal in the mid-eighteenth century, leading to the defeat of Alivardi Khan, the Nawab of Bengal, and finally the death of the Bargir leader, Bhaskar Pandit. Sukumar Sen thinks that the title of the work is rather pretentious as it is "a small poem of less than a couple of hundred lines."¹⁵

Despite its length and the contemporaneity of the accounts present in it, its prolegomena have been constructed in the form of a *purāṇa*. This is a valuable evidence of the widening of the meaning of the term *purāṇa*. This term had acquired at least five different connotations in the medieval period as shown in a tabular form below.



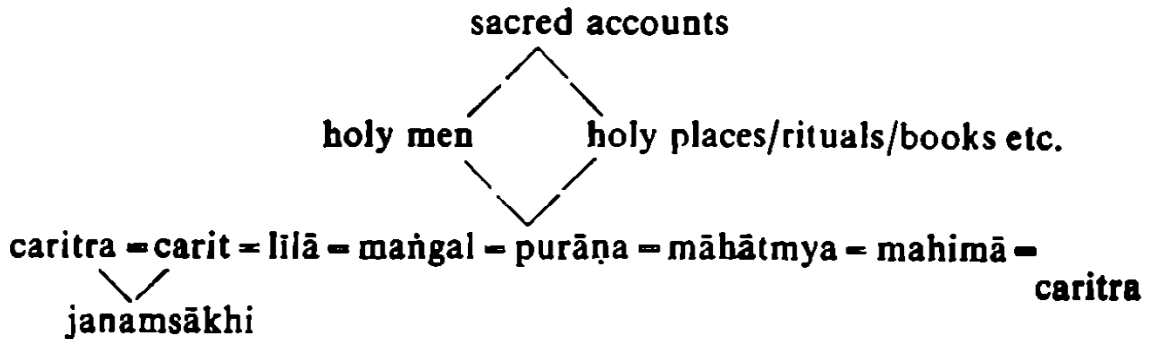
What is more interesting is that the various terms for some of these categories can be easily related to this extended concept of *purāṇa*.

Or in other words, several terms current in different languages, designating these categories, can be taken as variants of the term *purāṇa*. To illustrate this point one can examine the category mentioned in the above table as 'lives of saints' and 'accounts of sacred places'. If one takes into consideration all such 'sacred' accounts, one notices that along with sacred places, accounts of various rituals and religious festivals, and even holy texts, were available in various languages. For the lives of saints the common term was *caritra* or *carita*. In some languages, Malayalam is one of them, a distinction was of course made between the two : the former was used in the sense of 'history' and the latter in the sense of 'legend' or 'mythological story'. But most of the languages did not insist on this rigorous distinction. For example 'Caitanyacaritāmṛta' and 'Śrīcāitanyacaritra'¹⁰ in Bengali, 'Rāmcaritmānas' and 'Mīrācaritra'¹⁷ in Hindi, 'Kathāgurucarit' and 'Devadāmodaracaritra'¹⁸ in Assamese, 'Līlācaritra' in Marathi or 'Praudharāyacaritre' (stories extolling the Lingayata doctrines) in Kannada, show that *caritra* and *carit* were used without much discrimination. But in some cases *caritra* was almost a 'free variation' on *purāṇa*. For example, the fourteenth century Telugu Saiva poet Somanatha wrote two biographies of Vasava and Panditaradhya, two great Saiva saints, under the title *Vāsavapurāṇam* and *Paṇḍitārādhyaacaritram* respectively.

Hagiographies have been often designated as *līlā* (literally sports). This word links the activities of the saints with those of the gods as described in the *purāṇas*. Since the biographers of saints were inclined to describing their lives on the model of divine activities, they found the term *līlā* highly suitable. Hence the hagiographies were called the *līlā* of particular saints. *Prabhuliṅgalīlā* by Samarasa (c. 1460) in Kannada is the biography of Alam Prabhu or Prabhulinga. Several Vaisnava hagiographies in Bengali are also known as *līlā* e.g. *Śrī Vallabhalīlā*, *Keśavalīlā*. Along with these terms for hagiography, mention must be made of the Panjabi term *Janamsākhi*. Although this term does not mean hagiographical literature in general it stands for a particular variety of that literature : biographies of Guru Nanak written by his disciples, Bhai Gurdas, Bhai Bala and others.¹⁹

To complete the account of the term *purāṇa*, we should also concentrate on the poems dealing with sacred places, sacred rituals and festivals and sacred books. While Tamil *talapurāṇas* are accounts

of temples and places of pilgrimage, similar poems in other languages are often designated by the word *māhātmya* (glory/excellence) and occasionally, by *mahimā* (glory) which is compounded with a word indicating a holy place or a ritual or a book. Oriya literature abounds in this type of poems. The very titles, all having the word *māhātmya*, such as *Kārtikamāhātmya* (the glory of the month 'Kartik'), *Nilādrimāhātmya* (the glory of the mountain 'Niladri'), *Nirguṇamāhātmya* (the glory of 'Nirguṇa') etc., indicate the religious character of these poems. Along with these, *Ekādaśī-māhātmya* in Hindi, *Bāsulimāhātmya* in Bengali, *Gītāmāhātmya* in Panjabi and similar writings in various Indian languages extolling the glory of sacred months and dates and of deities can be included in the category of *talapurāṇa* with slight modification. In Assamese, there is at least one instance of *talapurāṇa* which is entitled *Vṛndāvana Caritra*, a text written in the seventeenth century.³⁰ Here *caritra* has been used in the sense of *māhātmya* and the title can be translated as "accounts of the glories of Vrindavana". On the basis of these evidences, it is possible to show the relationship between these terms and *purāṇa*.



All the terms mentioned in the above chart, except *maṅgal*, have been explained. The word *maṅgal* needs some explanation at this stage. In early literature, this word has been used in the sense of festivals.²¹ Songs associated with such festivals came to be qualified by the word *maṅgal* (auspicious). At a later stage this word, along with *vijay* (victory), began to be used as an epithet of narrative poems dealing with the stories of gods.²² In Bengali one finds a class of poetry known as *maṅgal kāvya*s which deal with the exploits of gods and goddesses and situations leading to their acceptance in society. Despite differences of opinion among scholars about the nature and origin of these deities—the most important

of them are Caṇḍī, Manasā and Dharma—one can safely assume, on the evidence of the texts of these poems, that these divinities in all probability belonged to local traditions and only at a much later stage were admitted into the Hindu pantheon. Sukumar Sen makes a distinction between two types of narrative poems in Bengali named after a particular deity with the addition of the words *maṅgal* and *vijay*. According to him, the *maṅgal* poems were related with ‘domestic rituals’ while the *vijay* poems had a basic affinity with the stories derived from the *purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata*. Both these words, however, were used indiscriminately in Bengali. Nevertheless the *maṅgal kāvya* proper can be distinguished from other narrative poems in respect of its ritualistic aspect. Sukumar Sen’s observation on this point is quite illuminating : “a recital of *Dharmamaṅgal* even now forms a part of the annual ceremony of Dharma worship just as the recital of *Manasāmaṅgal* and *Caṇḍīmaṅgal* were once ritualistic items of the worship of Manasā and Caṇḍī respectively.”²⁹ A common feature of these poems, he points out, is that “the climax in the tale, the longest and most exciting of the episodes, was sung and recited in a whole-night sitting on the day before the final ritual, and as such this section of the tale was known as *jāgaraṇa* (‘keeping the night’).”³⁰ In all probability these stories first appeared in their embryonic form as short narratives to be read during a ritual. Slowly the stories acquired mass and density, by incorporating some *purāṇic* episodes as well as by the improvisation of characters and situations depending upon the creative power of the individual poets. The *maṅgal kāvyas*, thus, aspired the state of *purāṇas* as well. Hence the *maṅgal kāvyas* are occasionally named as *purāṇas*, e.g. the *Manasāmaṅgal* is also known as the *Padmāpurāṇ* (Padmā being another name of Manasā) in some parts of Bengal, and *Dharmamaṅgal* as *Dharmapurāṇ*. The point to be noted is that the importance of Sanskrit *purāṇas* was so great in Hindu life that poets dealing with themes of divine activities were anxious to affiliate their writings with the *purāṇic* tradition. That is why the word *purāṇa* was used in so many contexts and with so many connotations. It is also worth mentioning that the word *maṅgal* was used in the titles of biographical literatures as well (e.g. *Caitanyamaṅgal*) as shown in the above chart.

The Sanskritic terms such as *ākhyān*, *upākhyān* and *kathā*, all meaning ‘tale’ or ‘story’, were extremely popular and were used in

almost all the Indian languages, except Tamil and Urdu, as synonymous terms.²⁵ The sources of most of these stories are Sanskrit epics and purāṇas, and thus they also can be grouped under the *purāṇas*. A large number of these stories deal with situations leading to the abduction as well as rescue of the heroines, the marriage and adventures and death of the heroes, as indicated in their titles, e.g. *Kīcakavadha* (the slaying of Kīcaka), *Gaurīharaṇa* (the abduction of Gaurī), *Sītā-vivāha* (the marriage of Sītā) etc.

III

Despite the strong Sanskritic domination, the folk or the popular traditions were not altogether passive. In fact it is because of the pressure of the folk traditions that the Sanskritic forms were changing and some of the narrative forms, though designated by Sanskritic terms, were acquiring individual distinctions. In Gujarati, for example, the *ākhyān* developed a new and complex structure of its own. The narrators of *ākhyāns*—known as *man bhattas*—divided the story into two parts. “Each division of an *ākhyāna* is in a single metre, and is called ‘*kadavun*’. At the end of the ‘*kadavun*’ come two lines in a different metre, which are called ‘*valan*’, which give in a nutshell either the gist of the ‘*kadavun*’ and refresh the memory of the listeners or a hint of what comes next. At the end of the *ākhyānas*, comes the colophon, where the poet gives his name and sometimes a few autobiographical details.”²⁶ The themes of the *ākhyāns* are almost invariably mythological but the narrators often introduced new episodic materials.

A significant break in the tradition of *ākhyān* literature came through the influence of Perso-Arabic romances and of the secular narratives on the indigenous traditions. To distinguish the secular narratives originating from folk sources, Gujarati coined a new term, *padyavārtā* (verse-tales). Panjabi borrowed the term *kissa* (*qissa*) from Urdu (which received it from Arabic) to designate a different class of tales some of which had come from the Perso-Arabic sources.²⁷ *Kissa*, however, slowly incorporated the Indian themes within its corpus. One of the earliest *kissas* to deal with an Indian theme was by Muhammad Fayyaz Wali of Velore (c. 1690-1707) who wrote *Qissa-e-Ratan-wa-Padam* based on Malik Muhammad Jayasī's *Padmāvatī*. Damodar who wrote the *kissa* of Heer and Ranjha,

using the theme from the Panjabi oral tradition, introduced an altogether new mode in Panjabi literature and *kissa* was established firmly within the Indian literary tradition.

Along with *kissa*, Panjabi recognizes another category of narrative literature known as *upākhyān* (a Sanskrit word, meaning 'story'). There are a large number of stories in the *Dasam Granth*, all generally known as *carittar upākhyān* (character-tales) or *tiria carittar* (women characters), most probably collected from folk sources.²⁸ Among them is also found the story of Heer-Ranjha, but presented in the style of a purāṇic story.

While the Perso-Arabic influence and the changes in socio-political situation helped the growth of several new types of narrative verse, it must be noted that the folk traditions have been exerting a pressure on the Sanskritic tradition throughout the medieval period and because of that narrative literatures without any connection with the Sanskritic tradition had already emerged in some of the languages. Several narrative forms originally affiliated to the folk traditions were slowly accommodated within the respectable poetic tradition with some modifications, especially by introducing some purāṇic element in them. The *pārāṇi* of Tamil and the *maṅgal kāvyas* of Bengali are examples of this process. In some cases the folk forms gained more vigour and attained respectability when poets of distinction or saints nourished them. The *vār* literature of Panjabi is an example of this process. A new form of narrative known as *rāso* also emerged under royal patronage. *Rāso*, generally described as heroic ballads by the modern critics, is in all probability of folk origin. Attempts, however, have been made to relate the term with Sanskrit *rājasuya*, *rahasya*, *rasāyana* and so on. Some scholars have also suggested a possible connection between *rāso* and the old Rajasthani *rāsa*, which is a story in verse, or *rāsak* which is a circular dance accompanied by songs. There is no doubt about the existence of a tradition of songs and ballads praising the heroic actions of kings and soldiers in folk oral poetry in various parts of the country, particularly in Rajasthan. It is quite possible that this oral tradition fascinated the court poets in the medieval period and some of them used the folk forms with a new intent. A number of *rāsos* are claimed to have been written by eye-witnesses, though this authenticity is often disputed.²⁹ But one can accept that as a literary device adopted by the poets. *Khum māṇ Rāso*, the first available

work of this kind, deals with Khumman II, ruler of Chitor, and his battles against Alamamu. *Bisāldev Rāso* deals with Bisaldev, king of Ajmir. It contains the romances as well as the adventures of Bisaldev. The most famous of the *rāsos* is *Prithvirāj Rāso* ascribed to Chand, a poet and a minister of the king Prithviraj. Other popular *rāsos* include *Ālhā Khaṇḍ*, *Vijaypāl Rāso*, *Hammir Rāso*. They all deal with the battles and adventures of kings and glorify the feudal values of heroism and chivalry.³⁰ In a broad sense they are part of historical narratives and forerunners of historical novels and ballads which became so popular all over the country in the nineteenth century.

In contrast to the *rāso*, the Tamil *pārānis*, also war-poems, are a blending of the purāṇic and historical narratives. The famous *Kaliṅkattuppārāni* by Sayankontar, the poet laureate of Kulottunga I, deals with the Kalinga War in 1110. "It is a feudal court-poem for the warlike and the bloodthirsty", as Zvelebil points out, and has elements of *purāṇa* in it. It describes with obvious delight and religiosity the intervention of the goddess Kali and the appearance of demons in the battle-field. Several other poems of this class deal with purāṇic themes. For example, Ottakkuttar's *Takkayā-kāppārāni* (c.1150 A.D.) is the story of Dakṣa (Takkaṇ), the son of Brahmā and the father-in-law of Śiva, and Virabhadra, the general of Śiva. It is possible to conjecture that the *pārānis* also belonged to the purāṇic tradition of narratives. But it started changing mostly under the pressure of royal courts which demanded new stories glorifying the military exploits of the kings. The purāṇic content was slowly replaced by a historical narrative, though many purāṇic episodes still continued to be present in them. Although the *pārāni* and *rāso* poems flourished in different parts of the country and the poets of one form had no knowledge of the other form, they can be viewed as two different attempts to achieve one goal i.e. the secularization of medieval narrative literature. While in *pārāni* one notices the slow emergence of historical themes of a realistic nature within the purāṇic framework, in *rāso* it was the emergence of historical themes out of the folk tradition. And in both cases, their forms were determined by the necessities of the medieval royal court. It is true that Sanskrit literature had a tradition of such narratives, dealing with the exploits and military adventures of kings, and it is quite possible that that tradition also influenced some of

the court poets in the medieval period. In Telugu one finds the continuation or shall we say, the re-emergence of that tradition. *Peddaḷagiri Vijayamu* by Ganapavarapu Venkatakari (a seventeenth century poet of Madura) describes the exploits and the victory of a king, who happens to be the patron of the poet, over a Muslim general of Bijapur.

The war-poems in particular, and the historical narratives in general, received a great impetus from the patronage of the kings. However, folk literature had developed its own traditions of such writings and in some parts of the country, heroic ballads flourished in spite of any royal patronage. The Marathi *powḍās* (the word is generally derived from the Sanskrit *pravāda*) represent this type. They are war ballads sung and recited by a class of poets known as *sa'ir* (which is an Arabic word meaning poet). The professional singers of these *powḍās* also came to be known as *gonḍhalis*. Most probably these ballads originated in the early medieval period but became extremely popular in the seventeenth century when Sivaji appeared as the hero. Like the Marathi *powḍās*, the *vārs* in Panjabi also deal with heroic action. Although the narratives describe the battles and violence and treachery of feudal lords they do not express 'the aristocratic tone' observed by Serebryakov.³¹ This type of poetry, some based on historical events, some imaginary—grew at a particular social milieu, and there is no evidence to show that they were composed under the patronage of feudal lords. It is the people—names of many poets are unknown—who wrote them, to encourage the society in its resistance against foreign invasion. Some of the *vārs*—*Tuṇḍe Asrāj di Vār*, for example—took their themes from folk sources, and some from contemporary and near contemporary historical events. In 1837 Kabir Yar wrote *Hari Singh Natwā di Vār* on an armed clash between Ranjit Singh and the Afgans. It must be also mentioned that the Sikh Gurus introduced a new element in the *vār* poems and created a new type of *vār*—as evidenced by Guru Nanak's *Asā di Vār* (song of morning) or Guru Govind's *Caṇḍī di Vār* (song of the goddess Caṇḍī)—where the mortal hero is replaced by God, and the mood of heroism by devotion.

IV

The medieval Indian long verses can be broadly divided into two categories: (a) secular and (b) religious, though the division is often illusory. The secular writings deal primarily with war and love as their predominant themes, and with mortal heroes and heroines, some legendary and historical and some imaginary.

In respect of the sources of the themes as well as the forms, long verses can be divided into three major groups. The first group belongs to the classical traditions of Indian literature. Translations and adaptations of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* and the *purāṇas*, as well as stories culled from them—often designated as *kathā*, *ākhyān*, *upākhyān*—fall in this group. Themes borrowed from the Perso-Arabic sources can also be assigned to this group if only because they, like Sanskrit and Ancient Tamil, represent the 'great traditions' of literature. The second group belongs to the local or folk or the 'little traditions' current in different regions. Between these two groups, there exists another group that emerged out of their interaction. It is not at all unlikely that some of the new genres of medieval poetry evolved out of the existing classical traditions. They are either a modification or a re-orientation of the older forms. It is also likely that a few types of poetry belonging to the little traditions gained a wider currency and attained a greater responsibility in this period by adopting certain elements of the classical literary traditions. A type of poetry in Tamil, known as *kātaḷ* (literally 'love'), can be cited as an illustration of the first process. In this poetry the heroine tells her friend, in a flower garden, about her love and sorrow and recalls her days of happiness spent with her lover. She then sends her friend as a messenger to the hero to persuade him to come back. This can be called without any hesitation a modification of the *dūta* poem in Sanskrit (which is also a recognized type of poetry—*tūtu*—in Tamil). The second process can be illustrated from the Bengali *maṅgal kāvyas* or the Oriya works designated as *purāṇas*. The stories described in these poems have no relation with the Sanskrit *purāṇas* and in all probability they are of indigenous origin. But they have been presented within a purāṇic framework obviously with the intention of affiliating them with the great tradition.

The divisions of poems I am suggesting here either on the basis

of the sources of their themes or of the themes as such, were not made either by the medieval poets or the medieval readers. They employed a large number of terms, many of them mutually exclusive, to designate the various types and sub-types of poetry. The vestiges of that practice are still to be found in the histories of various Indian literatures written in this century. Even the modern scholars use these terms without attempting to show the concepts of narrative poetry underlying them. These terms do not generally throw much light on the narrative techniques, except in a few rare cases, but they are useful in understanding the medieval literary situation.³² These terms indicate very clearly a fluid situation where the authority of Sanskrit poetics was crumbling down and the regional literary identity was exerting itself. They also indicate the growing tension between the great and the little traditions as well as the compromises made between the two. The Virasaivas of Karnataka who started writing *vacanas* as a defiance of the elitist tradition, finally made a compromise with it and wrote *campus*. The Jains who did not care for the *ṣaṭpadī* and wrote *campus*, at some stage of their history accepted the *ṣaṭpadī*, the most popular stanzaic pattern of Kannada poetry. When one compares the terms used for the short verse forms with those used for the long verse forms, one notices a predominance of the folk tradition over the former and a predominance of the classical tradition over the latter. *Dohā*, *ślok*, *abhaṅga*, *pāṭṭu*, *hāḍu*, *caupāii*, *garbo*, *lol*, *vai*, *moriro*, *gīt* and of course *pada* were the dominant short verse forms and except *pada* none of them was to be found in Sanskrit literature. In case of the long verse forms, on the other hand, the dominant terms were *mahākāvya*, *prabandha*, *ākhyān*, *purāṇ*, *caritra*. One of the reasons for this is perhaps the nature of the verses and the extent of participation of the common man in their performance. Various types of short verse were closely associated with folk rituals and festivals, and daily occupations such as grinding, pounding, sowing, harvesting, driving, rowing etc. Many of these verses were actually a part of the normal activity of the common man. In case of long verses, one notices, most of them were associated with religious festivals predominated by the brahmins or with local landlords, and in both cases the elitist influence was quite strong. In Panjab, where the language of the masses (i.e. Panjabi) did not receive much patronage from the elite, the classical Sanskrit forms (and

consequently the Sanskritic terms) were not as powerful as they were in other parts of India.

This is not to suggest, however, that the folk traditions were completely at bay in respect of the long verse forms. On the contrary, the medieval long verses, even when they drew their main inspiration from the classical sources, underwent a tremendous change both in formal features as well as in theme often under the pressure of non-classical traditions. It was the elite that was trying to popularize Sanskrit literature through translation—they took up only the epics and the *purāṇas* and not Sanskrit plays or poems—and thus the epics and the *purāṇas* became a part of the common man's literature. The classical terms thus had a greater currency, as the long verses flourishing within the folk traditions never enjoyed the enormous popularity that the translations and adaptations of the two Sanskrit epics did. Terms like *rāso*, *powḍā*, *pārāṇi*, *vār* were confined within a particular area and never extended beyond their linguistic territories. Unlike short verses which travelled across the country more easily, long verses like *rāso* and *powḍā* and *vār* had hardly gone beyond the areas where they were born.

In the absence of a central authority and of a critical apparatus in regional languages, no one felt the necessity of discovering the formal affinities among the poems known under various names in different parts of the country. *Rāso* in Hindi, *powḍā* in Marathi, *vār* in Panjabi, *pārāṇi* in Tamil shared certain thematic and formal features. But they were hardly noticed—because of the lack of communication—and thus these terms did not converge towards a term. Poets in North India, and most probably in some parts of South India too, did not know that Malayalam was using the word *gāthā* (which originally meant a song) as a special kind of metre (the one used in *Kṛṣṇa gāthā*) and later also in the sense of a long poem, e.g. *Bhāratagāthā*. Similarly the word *pāṭṭu* (which means a song) began to be compounded with another word e.g. *kilippāṭṭu* (literally parrot-song), and by implication meant a long poem.³⁸ In a situation like this the classical terms helped bringing a great unity in the diverse experiments in the different languages.

NOTES

1 See T.P. Meenakshisundaran, "The Tamil Literary Theory of the Bhakti Period", *Journal of the Madurai University*, II, ii (1970). 8-9.

2 A large number of *satsais* were written in Hindi in the medieval period. Abdul Rahim Khan Khanam (1556-1613), a minister in Akbar's court, wrote a *satsai* (also known as *Rahim Satsai*) which is a collection of *dohās*. Vrinda, a poet from Rajasthan, wrote another poem of this type in the eighteenth century which contains aphorisms and apothegms.

3 Both *satsais* and *śatakas* are a continuation of the classical tradition. Hāla's *Gāthā Saptasatī* and Bhartṛhari's *Vairāgya Śataka* and *Śṛṅgāra Śataka* are examples of these types of poems in Prakrit and Sanskrit respectively.

4 *History of Telugu Literature*: (New Delhi, 1968), p. 58.

5 *Pillaittamil* (the Tamil childhood) is also known as *pillaiikkavi*, *pillaiṇāṭṭu* or *pillaittirunāṁam*. This is a genre "in praise of childhood, singing of the male or female child between its third and twenty-first month of life." (Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature*, Wiesbaden, 1974, p. 213) Since the seventeenth century this genre is usually divided into ten sections and each stage (*paruvam*) becomes the platform for extolling a particular virtue of the child-god Murugaṇ, such as the protected stage, the cradle stage, crawling stage etc. The affinity between *pillaittamil* and the *bāla līlā* poems of the Vaisnavas in North India is too obvious to be stressed.

6 These are short religious verses generally based on the episodes culled from various *purāṇas*. See Maheswar Neog, *Asamīya Sāhitya Rūpurekhā* (Gauhati, 1974), pp. 92-93.

7 *Tokainilai* includes all the isolated poems known as *akam* and *puram*, all anthologies, as well as the lyrics of the Saivas and the Alvars. *Toṭarnilai* includes narrative and descriptive verses.

8 *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

9 See *ibid.*, p. 11.

10 See "Prabandha in Telugu Literature", *Triveni*, XLII, 3 (October-December 1973), 71-72.

11 See M. Jhaveri, *History of Gujrati Literature* (New Delhi, 1978), pp. 243-44.

12 See Vol. I, ed. Dharendra Varma *et al.* (Varanasi, 1963), 522-23.

13 See Zvelebil, *op. cit.*, p. 174. For an English translation of the *Periya Purāṇam* see J.M. Nallaswami Pillai, *St. Sekkilar's Periya Puranam* (Madras, 1924) and also *Lives of the Saiva Saints* (Madras, 1955).

14 *History of Oriya Literature* (New Delhi, 1962), p. 111.

15 *History of Bengali Literature* (New Delhi, 1960), p. 171.

16 See Sukumar Sen, *Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihās*, I, ii (Calcutta, 1963), p. 387.

17 *Mīrācaritra* was written in 1743 by Dayaram.

18 *Kathāgurucarit*, written by Indrajit, is a collection of lives of Assamese Vaisnava saints. *Devadāmodaracaritra* by Nilakantha Das was written in the seventeenth century.

19 The *janamsākhis* are to some extent comparable with the verses on Chaitanya written by his contemporaries, and also with *naat* in Urdu which were written in praise of the Prophet.

20 See Neog, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-95.

21 See the Asokan Rock Edict IX : "Jano ucāvacaṃ maṅgalaṃ karote" (people observe various *maṅgals* i.e. festivals). The word 'dharmamaṅgal' also occurs in this edict. See Radhagovindo Basak, *Aśokan Inscriptions* (Calcutta, 1959), p. 47.

22 See *Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihās*, I, i, p. 111

23 *History of Bengali Literature*, p. 56.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 57.

25 The Sanskrit words, *candrikā*, *vilāsa*, *prakāśa*, *saṁvāda* etc. were frequently used in the titles, e.g. *Rāmcandrikā*, *Chatraprakāś*, *Bhāvavilās*—all of them in Hindi.

26 Jhaveri, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

27 I. Serebryakov in his *Panjabi Literature* (Moscow, 1968) includes stories of the purāṇic origin under *kissa* (p. 39).

28 These stories can be classified into three groups according to their subject matter : (1) heroic stories, (2) humorous stories and (3) love stories. See S.S. Uppal, *Panjabi Short Story* (Delhi, 1966), pp. 200-02.

29 See K.B. Jindal, *A History of Hindi Literature* (Allahabad, 1957), pp. 10f., and L. Varshneya, *Hindī Sāhitya kū Itihās* (Allahabad, 1964), pp. 98f.

30 See T.C. Tomar, in *Hindī Sāhitya Koṣa*, p. 394.

31 See *op. cit.*, p. 18.

32 To give an instance of how the terms can be of some use in understanding the narrative technique or the mode of transmission of the narrative poems, the word *pācālī*, common both in Assamese and Bengali, may prove useful. According to some Assamese scholars *pācālī* has been derived from *pañca* (five), and it is called so because the narrative is often divided into five parts and is sung by five musicians. Sukumar Sen thinks that the word was derived from *pāñcālīka* ('doll-dance') though the *pācālīs* (the form in which most of the Bengali narrative poems, including the translations of the epics and the *maṅgal kāvyas*, are written) are found to have nothing to do with doll-dance. Sukumar Sen has pointed out that *pācālīs* are of two types or they consist of two elements : *nācāṇi* (the part which is sung and danced) and *siklī* (the part which is only sung). These terms indicate the nature of performance as well as give some idea about the formal aspects of these poems.

33 Although *pāṭṭu* means a song, *kilipāṭṭu* is a long poem. This particular type of poem was popularized by Ezthuthachan. It starts with a reference to a bird—often a parrot—which sings the story. Instead of a parrot, a swan or a bee is also used as the narrator. The poets actually devised a complicated pattern which is an indication of the oral tradition of transmission of the purāṇic stories. Śiva tells a story to Pārvatī, and the parrot overhears it. The poet requests the parrot to narrate it and the bird narrates it. It is commonly believed that an *āram* (curse) may fall on the poet describing a tragic event. So the poets devised this method of narration.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE STUDIES IN TAMIL NADU CONCEPTIONS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

V. Sachithanandan

P. Marudanayagam

Though a conservative section of modern Tamil scholarship has made a preposterous claim that comparatism in Tamil Nadu is as old as Tolkāppiar (*circa* 200-100 B.C.), the founder of what has come to be called with pseudo-scientific imprecision 'Tamilology'¹, scholarly comparative literary studies may be said to have begun with *Kamba Ramayana: A Study* by V.V.S. Aiyar who, with his polyglot classical scholarship, made "an attempt to prove that in the RAMAYANA OF KAMBAN the world possesses an epic which can challenge comparison not merely with the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*, the *Paradise Lost* and the *Mahabharata*, but with the original itself, namely, the *Ramayana* of Valmiki."² But it was the late K. Kailasapathy, the noted Tamil critic from Sri Lanka, who first brought to the notice of the native scholars the concept of comparatism as an antidote to their narrow provincialism which had proved detrimental to the growth of Tamil literary studies. Following the Marxist predilection for scientism, he christened his classic essay "Oppiyalin Tattuvankal" (principles of the science of comparison) which introduces a series of brilliant comparative exercises with a sociological bias, ranging from a study of Sankam poetry as the product of a heroic age to the implication of the seminal literary relations between Bharati and British romantic poets. He called his collection of essays *Oppiyal Ilakkiyam* (the science of comparative literature) for the very reason that the modern comparative methodology born in the wake of scientific developments in the nineteenth century is distinguishable from the age-old literary comparison in Tamil which he calls 'tokuttari murai' or the principle of collecting 'wisdom' from classics.³ However, his exposition of comparatism is derived from Hippolyte Taine's deterministic theory of literature and also the scientific researches of Mil-

man Parry and the Chadwicks on the folkloristic origin of European literature, an approach which Kailasapathy had earlier demonstrated with scholarly acumen in *Tamil Heroic Poetry*⁴, a path-breaking study which points to oral recitative motifs in the highly stylized poetry of the Sankam classics.

But the aesthetic aspect of the nature of comparative literature as a discipline, which Kailasapathy had neglected in preference to positivism, had already made its quiet entry into the academic world of Tamil Nadu via the English faculty in pioneering researches on the seminal and aesthetic links between Bharati on the one hand and the major British romantic poets and Walt Whitman on the other,⁵ thanks to the systematic training in comparative literature which some university teachers had received in the United States in the early sixties under the Fulbright/Smith-Mundt exchange scheme. Such comparisons were chosen under inner and outer compulsions like the versatility of the researchers in English (both American and British) and Tamil literatures, the consequent discovery of the indebtedness of the founder of modern Tamil poetry to western poets and the academic norms governing the choice of research topics by the English faculty which was not permitted by a bureaucratic administration to select purely comparative themes transcending the scope of the traditional discipline represented by the faculty. This obscurantist philosophy in the name of conservatism is no longer allowed to stifle the growth of broader literary studies because of a UGC directive of 1982 that the English faculty of Indian universities should encourage research in literary relations on a comprehensive scale.

But even under severe restraints on the freedom of intellectual investigation, successfully supplicated dissertations like *Whitman and Bharati: A Comparative Study* and *D.H. Lawrence and Jeyakanthan* did not seek to apply blindly "norms which originated in the West"⁶, but used a native perspective to make the comparisons fresh and fruitful. Though Whitman profoundly influenced Bharati in the latter's bold experimentation with prose-poetry which paved the way for the promiscuous free-verse writing in Tamil today, their mystical propensities, their concept of spiritual as well as political democracy and the evolution of a strident nationalism into internationalism were assessed in the light of Vedantic thought. The core chapter in the analogical study of Lawrence and the polemical leftist novelist Jeyakanthan is a critical examination of their mystique of sex by an

application of Tantric philosophy, which clearly enhances the reputation of the much maligned author of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Only *Frost and Bharati* confines itself to the narrow domain of the place of nature in the poetic universe of the writers.

Before comparative literature struck roots firmly in the Tamil soil, which has always been hospitable to ideas from beyond its ancient frontiers, if we go by the reception (in a non-specialized sense) of Sanskrit literary and religious thought from the time of *Tolkāppḷam*, the earliest of the Tamil texts and the first impact of British culture on Tamil literature in 1879 when the exotic novel form was ushered under the moralistic auspices of Johnson's *Rambler* essays, it exercised a sinister fascination on a group of native pedagogues, who turned it into a curricular subject adorned with local trappings and paved the way for a macabre specialization. The specialization involved 'teaching' comparative literature through repeated but tepid course work, devoid of any prior training or intellectual knowledge on the part of the teacher. It is this scandalous practice of the infant discipline turned into an indiscipline by a determined group of parochially inclined scholars, who refuse to see beyond their aesthetic nose, that has led to their strange insistence on purely internal comparisons being included in the scope of comparative literature. Therefore, "homo-genus" comparisons can neither logically nor epistemologically be associated with standard definitions of comparatism ranging from "the history of international relations" to "the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country and the study of the relationships between literature on the one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief".⁷ Since they are cynically tailored to suit the range of the comparative vision of an indigenous brand of scholarship, such an approach amounts to an abetment of the bankruptcy of literary monism. That apart, if comparative studies of two writers, culturally and linguistically not different from each other are also brought under the new discipline, they will get their identity lost in the much wider field of literary criticism, as comparison and analysis are acknowledged as the basic tools of criticism.⁸

The claim that there are "homogeneous comparisons" in the writings of Tiruttakka Tēvar, Kampan, Paranjōti Munivar and Varantaruvār⁹ is naive and meaningless because these poets were never interested in comparing themes and techniques found in their own and others' writings, but in echoing the words, images and ideas

of their predecessors with reverence and admiration. It was a time-honoured practice in the Tamil literary world to express one's regard for a great poet by repeating his words, phrases and ideas. This is comparable to the tendency of the English Augustans who found pleasure in decorating their poems with the epithets used by Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton and others. Thus we come across phrases like "amorous descant" and "woody theatre" in their poetry. But in Tamil, this kind of imitation was done on an incredibly large scale and the practice was never condemned but continued from the great Sankam age to the present time. In a Buddhist epic like *Manimēkalai*, there are echoes of at least ten passages from *Puranānūru*, two from *Perumpānātruppatai*, one from *Tirumurukātruppatai*, one from *Netunalvātai* and two from *Akanānūru*, in addition to numerous quotations from *Tirukkural* with an open acknowledgement. V.V. Swaminata Iyer, the great modern commentator and editor, in his editions of Tamil classics lists such parallel passages, but he never made any aesthetic comparative evaluation of the value of such echoes because he would have considered it a sacrilege to praise some poets quoted at the expense of others. That was because until we come to the twentieth century, when Tamil scholarship of the academic and not traditional kind was exposed to the western critical tradition, its approach to literary texts, many of which have still not been precisely dated and their authorship unidentified, had been exegetic and never critical in the sense that it was neither theoretical nor evaluative. And hence we have not produced aestheticians of the stature of Abhinavagupta and Ānandavardhana. Even Tolkappiar's emotive theory of 'meippātu' (literally 'physical expression'), akin to the rasa theory in its eight-fold classification, remains buried in commentaries, without its validity being tested in its application to literature.¹⁰

It follows that Panampāranār's fourteen-lined "Cirappauppāyiram" or "Special Prelude", the earliest utterance on the earliest Tamil text, is a commemoration of the genius of Tolkāppiar, who out of his mastery of the Tamil and Sanskrit traditions, codified for the first time the laws of phonology, morphology and poetics. Therefore the claim that Tolkāppiar's compatriot (more a matter of tradition than truth) has evolved a method of comparison is a figment of scholarly imagination.¹¹ But this is not to deny the fact that for centuries there had been a tradition of bilingual scholarship involving a disciplined but old-fashioned study of both Tamil and Sanskrit as a result of

which comparison became second nature with poets, pandits and commentators, until modern Tamil scholarship wrenched itself away from this noble tradition for emotional and political reasons. Some of the finest products of that tradition like S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, Panditmani Katiresan Chettiar and T.P. Meenakshisundaran had been with us till the other day. To give a sample of their comparative scholarship, Katiresan Chettiar, who translated *Mṛcchakaṭikam* into Tamil, has made a perceptive study of the letter written by Śakuntalā in Kālidāsa's *Śākuntalam* with that of Mādhavi in Ilanko's *Cilappatikāram*, the oldest of the Tamil epics. What is left of this commendable tradition of scholarship is "homo-genus comparisons", a grim parody of the comparative spirit in literary studies.

NOTES

1 See V. Sp. Manickam, *Oppiyal Noakku* (Comparative Perspective) (Chidambaram, 1978), p. 1.

2 (Bombay, 1965 ; 2nd edn. 1970), p. 1.

3 See *Oppiyal Ilakkiyam*, (Madras, 1968 ; rev. edn. 1978), p. 16. The revised edition contains the first survey of comparative literature studies in Tamil Nadu.

4 (Oxford, 1968). It was originally prepared as a doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Professor George Thompson of the University of Manchester.

5 See V. Sachithanandan, (i) *The Impact of Western Thought on Bharati* (Annamalainagar, 1970) ; (ii) *Whitman and Bharati : A Comparative Study* (Madras, 1978). The former was originally submitted as a dissertation for the M.Litt. degree (1960) and the latter for the Ph.D. degree (1968), both of Annamalai University. Articles based on their findings had earlier appeared in *Tamil Culture* (1961 & 1963), *Calcutta Tamil Sangam Silver Jubilee Number* (1962) and the *Journal of the Annamalai University* (1963).

6 N. Subramanian, "Comparative Literature in Tamil Nadu : A Loud Thinking", *JJCL*, 20-21 (1982-83), 90.

7 See Robert J. Clements, *Comparative Literature as Academic Discipline : A Statement of Principles, Praxis, Standards* (New York, 1978), p. 5.

8 The aberrations of "homogeneous" comparisons run parallel to a steady growth of genuine comparative studies, and a comprehensive textbook in Tamil, *Oppilakkiyam : Oru Arimukam* is now under print with the Oxford University Press, Madras.

9 These are the authors of the Tamil classics named by N. Subramanian, p. 87.

10 An exception is Swami Vibbulananda (1892-1947), a classical scholar from Sri Lanka, who has classified and translated partly in verse and partly in prose twelve plays of Shakespeare by applying to them Tolkāppiar's expressive theory. They were serialized under the title *Madanka Choosamani* in *Centamil*, the journal of the Madurai Tamil Sankam, beginning with the issue dated 1924.

11 See N. Subramanian, p. 87.

ARTHUR MILLER AS A CRITIC OF IBSEN

R.K. Kaul

The reaction against prose drama in general and Ibsen in particular began quite early in this century. In 1907 the playwright J.M. Synge condemned Ibsen for "dealing with the reality of life in joyless and pallid words."¹ The poet W.B. Yeats in his article on "A Popular Theatre" (1919) expressed the wish to "prepare a stage for the whole wealth of modern lyricism".² Arthur Symonds expounded the views of the Yeats circle more plainly :

When words come, there is no reason why they should not be in verse, for only in verse can we render what is deepest in humanity of the utmost beauty.³

This sentiment is echoed by one of the speakers in T.S. Eliot's "Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry" (1928), "The human soul, in intense emotion, strives to express itself in verse."⁴ From then on till at least 1951 when Eliot delivered his lecture on "Poetry and Drama", the revival of poetic drama was attempted by a number of playwrights including Christopher Fry and Eliot himself. But already with the *The Cocktail Party* (1950) there was a falling off in the literary prestige of poetic drama.

A complicating feature of this debate about whether prose or poetry is the more appropriate medium of serious or tragic drama is the ambiguity of the key words, namely 'poetry' and 'prose'. While the numerous senses (some of them contradictory) in which the word 'poetry' is used have been taken into account by every important critic, it has often been too readily assumed that the sense of the word 'prose' is free of ambiguity. After the unconscious witicism of M. Jourdain in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* it should have

been more widely recognized that not every kind of speech or even writing is 'prose' simply because it is not in verse. Even Wordsworth's assumptions about 'prose' are simplistic, considering that his views on 'metrical composition' are quite sophisticated. Coleridge pointed out in *Biographia Literaria* (1817) in response to Wordsworth that

prose itself, at least in all argumentative and consecutive works, differs, and ought to differ, from the language of conversation ; even as reading ought to differ from talking. (Chap. XVIII)

At one extreme we have the mannered prose of John Lyly, at the other the use of underworld slang in some contemporary drama. T.S. Eliot, who advocated the use of verse, was fully aware of the fact that Congreve and Bernard Shaw in their plays employ a prose style which is distinctly different from our ordinary speech.⁸

Arthur Miller examines the matter in a more searching manner. He refuses to isolate the question of medium from the wider problem of what he calls "style". The choice of the stylistic level, according to him, is related to the subject matter of the plays :

That a play is written prosaically does not make it a realistic play, and that the speech is heightened and intensified by imagery does not set it one side of realism necessarily.⁹

It is the nature of the questions asked and answered, rather than the language used—whether verse, ordinary slang or colorless prose—that determines whether the style is realistic or non-realistic. (p. 115)

In his view of drama which he justly calls "organic" the style is determined not only by the nature of the questions asked⁷ but also by the dramatist's conception and manipulation of time in a play. Nor are the motives of the characters irrelevant to the choice of the medium. "It is necessary," he asserts, "not only to depict why a man does what he does, or why he nearly didn't do it." (p. 117) In a truly Aristotelian strain he concludes, "The underlying poem of a play I take to be the organic necessity of its parts." (p. 118)

I venture to call this formulation Aristotelian in spite of the fact

that Miller ostensibly disowns the relevance of Aristotle to modern tragedy :

There is no more reason for falling down in a faint before his *Poetics* than before Euclid's geometry, which has been amended numerous times by men with new insights, nor, for that matter, would I choose to have my illnesses diagnosed by Hippocrates rather than the most ordinary graduate of an American medical school, despite the Greek's genius. Things do change, and even a genius is limited by his time and the nature of his society. (p. 145)

Such a brave statement does credit to Miller's essentially American character and forms a refreshing contrast to Eliot's conclusion that the only "Perfect Critic" in the history of Europe is Aristotle.⁸ His attitude of irreverence to the authority of the masters gives a liveliness to his critical essays and articles.

The reputation of Ibsen has, over the century, gone through fluctuations in inverse ratio to the success of poetic drama. After the supposed aims of Ibsen's dramas, such as women's suffrage, had been achieved it was believed that Ibsen had outlived his fame. The German playwright Brecht went to the extent of claiming in 1928 that Ibsen's *Ghosts* had been rendered "obsolete through the discovery of Salvarsan as a remedy against syphilis."⁹ A glance at the most recent numbers of the drama journals, however, demonstrates that Ibsen continues to attract audiences and stimulate criticism.

Miller's pronouncements on Ibsen over a period of nearly thirty years reflect some of the fluctuations in the critical estimate of Ibsen from time to time. He began apparently by seeing Ibsen (through the eyes of Shaw ?) as a rebel against convention, but even in 1956 in a controversial essay called "The Family in Modern Drama" he qualified his assertions about Ibsen with the remark that "there is as much subjectivity and inner poetry in *Hedda Gabler*—I daresay a lot more—as in any of these mood plays." (p. 83) On the other hand he insisted in 1965 in "What Makes Plays Endure" that *Hedda Gabler* could not have been born without its "reflective mirror surface", its "journalistic shell" which consists, according to him, in the rebellion against small-town narrowness, smugness, the sealed morality whose real fruit was spiritual death." (p. 259) The variations in Miller's criticism of Ibsen therefore are within definable

limits. There is enough consistency to enable us to examine his observations as a coherent whole.

In his preface to *A View from the Bridge* (1955) Miller painstakingly distinguished the "social plays" in contemporary America from the social plays in ancient Greece. In every protagonist of the Greek tragedies, Miller claimed, "there is the idea of the Greek people, their fate, their will, and their destiny." (p. 53) In contemporary America on the other hand

the term "social play" brings up images which are historically conditioned, very recent, and, I believe, only incidentally pertinent to a fruitful conception of the drama. The term indicates to us an attack, an arraignment of society's evils such as Ibsen allegedly invented and was later taken up by left-wing playwrights whose primary interest was the exposure of capitalism for the implied benefit of socialism or communism. (p. 53)

From the careful manner in which this misunderstanding of Ibsen in contemporary America is hinted at it would appear that Miller himself was not under any such misapprehension.

Nevertheless he propounds the view that the left-wing playwrights of the thirties were a continuation of the Ibsen tradition, thereby suggesting that he shares some of Shaw's misconceptions about Ibsenism. He repeatedly points out that the "arraignment of evils was a characteristic feature of Ibsen's dramas." (p. 61) Having adapted *An Enemy of the People* he appears to extend the message of the play to the entire corpus of Ibsen consisting of at least 26 titles including poetic, historical and symbolic plays.

In an account of the literary influences on his work, entitled "The Shadow of the Gods" (1958) he acknowledges his debt to Ibsen. He formed from Ibsen's work (and Dostoyevsky's) an idea of what a writer is supposed to be :

One had the right to write because other people needed news of the inner world, and if they went too long without such news they would go mad with the chaos of their lives. With the greatest presumption I conceived that the great writer was the destroyer of chaos, a man privy to the councils of the hidden gods who administer the hidden laws that bind us all and destroy us if we do not know them. (p. 180)

The light in which Miller saw Ibsen has dimmed somewhat with the passage of time. Still Miller sees an essential kinship between Ibsen

and himself. Just as Miller in his writings sought to clarify, to enlighten the predicament of man in society, so did Ibsen. Ibsen undoubtedly did that but the current view of his achievement is that his plays mystify no less than clarify the situation dramatized. The playwright does not guide us to the solution of the problem raised. Should the Master Builder, for example, have refused to climb to the top of the magnificent "castle in the air" he had built? Again should the sculptor Rubek in *When We Dead Awaken* have turned a deaf ear to the call of Irena? The protagonists would not then have exposed themselves to giddiness or snow-storms, but then they would have lost the esteem of their mistresses which they valued more than their survival.

Miller's next pronouncement on Ibsen is to be found in his address delivered at Harvard (1956). In this address entitled "The Family in Modern Drama" he says, "When we think of realism we think of Ibsen—and if we don't we ought to..." (p. 70) But he immediately corrects the misleading connotation of "Realism" current in popular minds. "Realism," he asserts, "is a style, an artful convention, and not a piece of reportage." (p. 70) Again in his introduction to *Collected Plays* (1957) he states, "Realism, heightened or conventional, is neither more nor less an artifice, a species of poetic symbolization, than any other form." (p. 169)

He sets out painstakingly to correct popular misconceptions about Ibsen himself, "As with any artist, Ibsen was writing not simply to photograph scenes from life." (p. 70) "Ibsen, the master of Realism," he claims, "suddenly burst out of the realist frame, out of the living room, when he wrote *Peer Gynt*." (p. 72) There is a slight distortion of chronology in this statement because *Peer Gynt* (1867) was written *before* not *after* *The Pillars of Society* (1877), *A Doll's House* (1879) and *An Enemy of the People* (1882). On the whole, however, his interpretation of Ibsen in this address is acceptable. In his introduction to the *Collected Plays* he is at pains once again to rectify the popular image of Ibsen, "More often than not, these days, he is thought of as a stage carpenter with a flair for ideas of importance." (p. 123) At another point in the introduction he admits that "there is a strain of mystic fatalism in Ibsen so powerful as to throw all his scientific tenets into doubt" (p. 151) implying perhaps that beyond a certain point there is a parting of

ways between Ibsen and Miller whose faith in the tenets of science is beyond question.

In 1951 Miller adapted Ibsen's controversial play *An Enemy of the People*. It was natural for Miller to find in this play a relevance to America in the fifties. Ibsen's play was a retaliation to the outrage caused in the middle class public, especially in Norway, to *Ghosts*. Miller saw in the McCarthyism of the fifties in America a parallel to the shock experienced by the bourgeoisie in the eighties of the last century.

Dr Stockman, the protagonist of *An Enemy of the People* was tactless enough to publish his findings about the infection in the water of a much advertised health resort. He was advised by the mayor, who happened to be his brother, to tone down his article. But he refused to compromise with the truth, especially when public health was at stake. Dr Stockman is the spokesman of the freedom of scientific inquiry. The local press which professes to promote the principle of liberalism and freedom of expression promises support to the doctor in the first place out of petty spite against the mayor. But once the editor and the printer realize what the financial implication of disseminating this particular truth will be for the rate payers i.e. the citizens of the town, they withdraw support from the doctor. The play ends with all the citizens of the town denouncing him and smashing the window panes of his house. The landlord gives him a notice of eviction. His neighbours and friends boycott him. Finally his daughter is cashiered by the school where she teaches. There is only one friend who dares to offer shelter to him. He is dismissed as the captain of a ship.

Miller's contentions about Ibsen's play are sound. It is a denunciation of the herd mentality which is guided solely by vested interest even when this interest is identified with the perpetuation of evil. Miller took the opportunity of asserting that the stage is the place for ideas, philosophies and intense discussion of public issues. Ibsen, he insisted, is pertinent today. By implication he was stating that the playwright had the moral duty to denounce mob hysteria roused by Senator McCarthy in the fifties. The intolerant majority took the opportunity of persecuting the liberals and leftists in the name of anti-communism. The patriotic plea was an excuse for suppressing dissent.

Two years later Miller produced *The Crucible* (1953). He

dramatized an episode from the past to present a parallel to McCarthyism. Witch-hunting in seventeenth century Salem was similar in many respects to the persecution of "un-American activities" in contemporary America.

In his introduction to the *Collected Plays* Miller pointed to the Ibsenesque features of *All My Sons*. It is a play with a distinct meaning reducible to a sentence. It sets out to prove a thesis. It is forged upon a factual bedrock, hard actions and irrevocable deeds. (p. 131) Structurally there is an unfolding of the past in the course of the play. "Every effect has a cause", is a principle exemplified psychologically and structurally. *All My Sons* is close enough to Ibsen's plays of the middle period to warrant its characterization as an Ibsenesque play.

It now remains to consider how far Miller's characterization of Ibsen will stand critical scrutiny. Without being pedantic it can be conceded that about many of Ibsen's plays such as *The Pillars of the Society*, *An Enemy of the People* and *A Doll's House* his conclusions are broadly just and tenable. But there are reservations and qualifications called for if we consider the totality or even the bulk of Ibsen's writings. We shall exclude the poetic plays such as *Brand* and *Peer Gynt* from our scrutiny. Miller is probably aware that his statements do not apply to them. Even Ibsen's repudiation of his own philosophy of unmasking illusions and ideals in *The Wild Duck* could be taken as an example of the thesis play, even though the thesis in this instance is an antithesis. But doubts rise in our minds if this thesis is applied to the plays of the final period like *The Master Builder*, *The Lady from the Sea* and *When We Dead Awaken*. These plays are usually classified as symbolic. *The Lady from the Sea*, for example, is too subtle to be contained in the formulas which Miller employs to define Ibsen's achievement as a dramatist. Even plays like *Ghosts* and *Rosmersholm* which ostensibly deal with social questions, have more to do with the futility of the attempt to escape from family tradition and heredity rather than with the dependence of individual health on the health of society.

In an interview entitled "Morality and Modern Drama" (1958) Miller stated to Phillip Gelb that, contrary to the current fashion, Ibsen used to present answers to questions. According to Miller Ibsen had faith in social change as an amelioration or a transforming force of the human. (p. 196) Miller names two of Ibsen's

plays i.e. *A Doll's House* and *Hedda Gabler* which, according to him, exemplify his thesis :

In the *Doll's House* and even in *Hedda Gabler*, we will find ... speeches toward the ends of these plays which suggest, if they don't overtly state, what the alternative values are to those which misled the heroes and heroines of the action shown (p. 196)

While it may be claimed that this statement is at least a partial truth so far as *A Doll's House* is concerned, it is, in my view, untenable about *Hedda Gabler*. Miller himself modified his earlier view in an article entitled "What Makes Plays Endure?" (1965). He admits in this article that the contemporary relevance of *Hedda Gabler* is difficult to recapture now :

Ibsen's focal point of attack, his contemporaneity was rebellion against small-town narrowness, smugness, the sealed morality whose real fruit was spiritual death. But we cannot bring his context to *Hedda Gabler* any more. Society, conditions, have melted away and she lives autonomously now, a recognizable neurotic who transcends her historical moment. (p. 259)

Miller appears to regret that "the journalistic shell of the play—its reflective mirror surface—is its mortal part" while "its transcendency springs from the author's blindness."

This is surprising in view of the fact that he chose *Hedda Gabler* in the first place as an example of "what finally survives" i.e. "archetypal characters and relationships which can be transferred to the new period." There is some confusion betrayed in such mutually inconsistent statements.

Consistency demands that a recognition of the archetypal situation of Hedda, a latter-day Madame Bovary, wedded to Tesman, a version of George Eliot's Casaubon (vide *Middlemarch*), should be evidence of Ibsen's insight into human nature. From the diversity and depth of the critical interpretations of this play in recent years it appears that Ibsen has in Hedda created a myth comparable to Don Quixote and Hamlet. There is no accurate model of such characters in life but once created the myth illuminates many characters in real life. It is larger than life.

Miller's shortcomings as a critic of Ibsen may be ascribed to his attempt to place the whole of his discussion of drama within the relatively restricted tragic frame. There is hardly a reference to

the tradition of comedy. Every time the word "drama" or "theater" occurs it is obvious to the reader, whether Miller explicitly says so or not, that he is thinking of tragedy. It appears to me that it is more fruitful to talk of Shaw, for instance, or Brecht and many of other dramatists whose names occur in Miller's essays, articles and interviews as comic dramatists. When Miller refers to Shakespeare he almost invariably has *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* in mind and not the creator of Rosalind or Falstaff. Similarly when Miller talks of the ancient Greeks he never mentions Aristophanes or Menander.

Admittedly Ibsen was deficient in both wit and humour. Even Ibsen's Shavian plays, i.e. plays about social themes, are never really comic. But the absence of comic situations does not by itself make *A Doll's House* tragic. The bulk of Ibsen's plays do not belong to either of the two forms of drama created in ancient Greece. Perhaps Ibsen's plays should be called neither. Instead 'serious drama' is a more accurate description of these plays.

Miller not only insists on discussing Ibsen as a tragic artist, he makes it perfectly plain that by tragedy he means Aeschylus and Sophocles. Repeatedly the examples he names of tragic protagonists are Prometheus, Orestes and Oedipus. Of these Prometheus, who is mentioned most frequently, happens to be unrepresentative even of Greek tragedy.

This in itself could be treated as personal preference but Miller repeatedly claims that the German Expressionists and the left-wing writers of America in the thirties belong to the Greek tradition. The first expression of this view is qualified. In "The Family in Modern Drama" (1956) he confines the parallel between Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound* and Georg Kaiser's *Gas I* and *Gas II* to the technical level :

The technical arsenal of Expressionism goes back to Aeschylus. It is a form of play which manifestly seeks to dramatize the conflict of either social, religious, ethical, or moral forces *per se*, and in their own naked roles, rather than to present psychologically realistic human characters in a more or less realistic environment. (p. 75)

In "The Shadow of the Gods" (1958), however, where he traces his own intellectual development, he does not qualify his statement so carefully :

I read the Greeks and the German Expressionists at the same time and quite by accident. I was struck by the similarity of their dramatic means in one respect—they are designed to present the hidden forces on the stage. (p. 181)

So far Miller's only mistake is to extend the formulation about *Prometheus Bound* to the whole of Greek drama. But what follows is not a mere oversight :

I was told that the plays of Aeschylus must be read primarily on a religious level ... one did not have to be religious to see in our own disaster the black outlines of a fate that was not human, nor of the heavens either, but of something between. Like the holding of a mob, for instance, which is not a human sound but is nevertheless composed of human voices combining until a metaphysical force of sound is created. (p. 181)

To claim that the predicament of Orestes can be grasped in secular terms is patently misleading. On the one hand it is his duty to punish the murderer of his father, on the other hand he provokes the wrath of the Eumenides for the murder of his own mother. Such mutually incompatible demands which are equally binding are responsible for the tragic dilemma of characters like Creon in the *Antigone* of Sophocles and Hippolytus in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides. The wrath of the gods can scarcely be compared to the howling of a mob.

Perhaps it is uncharitable to complain of Miller's imperfect understanding of Greek tragedy in view of his own subsequent qualifications. In an interview with Olga Carlisle and Rose Styron (1966) he repudiated the claim rashly made in "Tragedy and the Common Man" (1949) that :

the tragic feeling is evoked in us when we are in the presence of a character who is ready to lay down his life, if need be, to secure one thing—his sense of personal dignity. (p. 4)

Of such characters he named Orestes, Medea, Hamlet and Macbeth as examples. In 1966 in the interview mentioned above he acknowledged that :

to make a direct or arithmetical comparison between any contemporary work and the classic tragedies is impossible because of the question of religion and power, which was taken for granted as an apriori consideration in any classic tragedy. (p. 266)

In 1977 when he introduced his *Theater Essays* he was repentant :

I have often wished that I had never written a word on the subject of tragedy. I am not a scholar, not a critic ... I only unwittingly entered an area of near-theological devoutness which I had not known existed. (pp. xli-xlii)

In view of these retractions it would appear to be superfluous to point to the lapses of the more confident pronouncements of Miller's earlier years. But we cannot help ascribing his misinterpretations of Ibsen to his misconceptions about tragedy in general and Greek tragedy in particular.

NOTES

- 1 *Plays* (London, 1938), p. 174.
- 2 Reprinted in *The Theory of the Modern Stage*, ed. Eric Bentley (Penguin, 1970), p. 337.
- 3 "A Theory of the Stage", reprinted *ibid.*, p. 339.
- 4 *Selected Essays* (London, 1951), p. 46.
- 5 See *On Poetry and Poets* (London, 1957), p. 73.
- 6 Introduction to *The Collected Plays*. See *The Theater Essays* of A. Miller, ed. Robert A. Martin (New York, 1978), p. 118. All the quotations from this book are followed by the page number in the body of the article.
- 7 The only observation which seems inexplicable to me is that "the tragedies of Shakespeare are species of realism, and those of Aeschylus and Sophocles are not." (p. 115)
- 8 *The Sacred Wood* (London, 1948), p. 11.
- 9 Quoted by Martin Esslin in "Ibsen and Modern Drama", in Errol Durbach, ed., *Ibsen and the Theatre* (London, 1980), p. 72.

THE MOTHER IMAGE : A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CLYTEMNESTRA, MEDEA AND KANNAKI

K. Chellappan

Rani Rema Devi

A comparative study of themes and motifs in literatures and cultures shows not only the transmigration of certain themes and symbols, but also the persistence of certain universal patterns in the evolution of human consciousness. Henry H.H. Remak says, "The collision between or interpenetration of different cultures and traditions demands a linguistic and cultural preparation and diversification not required of 'ordinary' literary scholars and normally not possessed by them. The perspective, the flair, the temptations of the comparatist are not identical with those of the non-comparatists though there is, of course, much overlapping."¹ The purpose of this paper is to study the characters of Clytemnestra, Medea and Kannaki as portrayed by Aeschylus, Euripides and Ilango Adigal, a tragic epic poet in Tamil, in so far as they embody the archetypal image of a divine mother.

Fertility, procreation and mother-worship fall within the compass of an archetypal consciousness and are reflected as divine images in the portrayal of certain characters. These characters assume a symbolic projection of the male and the female at a moment when their primitive energies are forced through the narrow straits of social conformity and find an outlet in a series of irrationally violent acts. Dichotomy is thus transmitted into a fusion. Freud says, "We speak too of a 'masculine' and 'feminine' mental attributes and impulses, although, strictly speaking, the differences between the sexes can lay claim to no special physical characterization. What we speak of in ordinary life as 'masculine' or 'feminine' reduces itself from the point of view of psychology to the qualities of 'activity' and 'passivity'."² This seems to be particularly true of Clytemnestra, Medea and Kannaki in whom the passive nature gains an inner strength

from a tragic conflict, activating dormant impulses into violent action.

Women characters have been categorized into various types. The aggressive woman is depicted as demoralizingly evil, yet it is her inherent maternalism that drives her beyond the limits of human endurance fettered by society—a lone character like Antigone soon feels the need to break the bonds of restraint. The Sanskrit dramatists loved portraying helpless, delicate women who were victimized by society and meekly bowed to their fate. But this helplessness and submissiveness became their source of strength and they were turned into agents and instruments of fate. Writers and audience alike eulogized the idealistic Sitā, willing to sacrifice and suffer an untold tragedy without murmur. Underlying all these female character portraits lies the invisible hand of divinity or fate, shaping their environment and channelizing their emotions until they become the retributive force that wipes out the injustice of former generations. We propose to show here how the masters of tragedy in Greek and Tamil mould their women characters stage by stage into the reflection of the divine mother who crushes the social injustice perpetrated on her by a male-dominated society.

Epics and dramas show woman as a tool of the gods. Joseph Campbell believes that even the birth of Athena from Zeus' head was a transference from the matriarchal to the patriarchal system.⁸ He points out that the influence of the female over the male is carried down from the primitive times in a series of "continual images". The male-female dichotomy was such a powerful influence that the male half overpowered and suppressed the female intellect to such an extent that the male intellect itself started waning without companionship and stimulation. It is ironical that while the role of the family provider was partly reversed, the roles played by man and woman in creation and labour remained unchanged. The interaction between social and intellectual changes made woman unusually sensitive to tragic situations. In such a social environment, the tragic woman rose to magnificent heights and assumed the image of the primordial mother.

In the patriarchal cosmogonies ... the moral image of divine motherhood is taken over by the father, and we find such motifs as, in India, the World Lotus growing from the reclining Vishnu's navel—whereas, the primary reference of the lotus in India has always been the goddess

Padma, "Lotus", whose body itself is the universe, the long stem from navel to lotus should properly connote an umbilical cord through which the flow of energy would be running from the goddess to the god, mother to child, not the other way.⁴

Campbell's inference that the lotus is the mother is resubstantiated by the fact that Brahmā, the creator himself, is "amalotbhava" or 'born of the lotus'. Again we see that Lakṣmi, the spouse of Viṣṇu is "Padmā" or the lotus itself, validating the point we will make later that the wife is not only consort but also mother to the husband.

Framed in an aura of divinity, the tragic woman was certainly capable of something greater than the submissive role she was expected to play in a patriarchal world. The strain of suppression catapulted into a tragic crisis. "The natural grandeur of man's primal image is at the same time an image of divinity."⁵ This reference to Apollo is nevertheless applicable also to women characters. For example, the terrible conflict of Orestes with the Erinyes of Clytemnestra, Agamemnon vs. Clytemnestra and man vs. woman was Aeschylus' grand method of reviewing contemporary Greek thought and society. In a series of symbols and images, Aeschylus builds up the character of Clytemnestra into an unconscious reflection of the revenge-seeking mother-goddess.

Engels considered that the tragic destinies of the characters in *Oresteia*, and the conflict between Orestes ... and the Furies ... reflected a profound change taking place in the life of society, the replacement of the matriarchate by the patriarchate. He saw the resolution of the tragic conflict, i.e., the defeat of the furies and Orestes' acquittal, as a reflection in art of the patriarchal principles over the maternal one, a development characteristic of that age.⁶

Two symbols stand out in their contribution towards the divine mother image of Clytemnestra in *Agamemnon*: the lion and the fire. The lion, an animal sacred to Rhea, the ancient mother-goddess,⁷ is a constantly repeated image in the play. The chorus in *Agamemnon* relates the story of the lion-cub nurtured by humans, reverting to its natural instincts as it grows (ll. 716-31). Of such a primal nature is a curse, a conscious thought that hovers over the generations, silently wreaking havoc on its own, and sometimes when deliberately invoked. Aeschylus makes his characters continually aware of the curse, subtly

emphasizing it in order to show that the subconscious psyche can act out a nurtured hatred. Woman could never forget her role as the procreator and when the tradition of the mother-child relationship is overruled by a patriarchal system, her primal instincts erupt in a mindless frenzy of destructive protest against outrages on her maternal instinct. The lion is the symbol of such a blood-consciousness. Aeschylus tells us, "This thing they raised in their house, was blessed by God to be priest of destruction." (ll. 735-36) The reference could apply equally to the curse of Thyestes, or to Clytemnestra who had become the tool of destruction that was to ravage the house of Atreus, transformed into the representation of an enraged Artemis condemning the wanton desecration of the gift of life (see ll. 133-37). The subdued mother is moulded into the instrument of destiny, thereby assuming the form of an avenging goddess.

The pattern of destruction in the *Oresteia* beginning with the murder of Thyestes' children, the killing of the pregnant hare by Zeus' eagles and the needless bloodshed at Troy leading to the sacrifice of Iphigenia ending in Clytemnestra's murderous revenge and the matricide by Orestes, follows a discernible design of crimes against the filial bond, analogous to the reactions of the mother-goddess to the impediment in the process of creation. Similarly, the fire symbol reaches a magnitude in its relationship to the nature of Clytemnestra. She revels in her relay of beacons. The dancing tendrils of her signals are reflections of her own scaring impulses, the flames of deprivation engulfing her in their blind blaze. The message heralding Agamemnon's victory and arrival is picked up by the relay, the fire growing brighter and intenser as it reaches Argos. Aeschylus skillfully builds up a feeling of impending calamity and disaster with his magnificent description of the beacons, "... the flare sickened never, but grown stronger yet ..." (l. 196) The malevolence and anticipation of revenge in Clytemnestra's beacon speech flare up, kindling primitive emotions within her and finally becoming a consuming holocaust before the relay actually reaches Argos. H.D.F. Kitto says, "... the beacon speech lifts what was no more than a competent piece of organization to the level of something more elemental. The first word is 'Hephaestos' ; the fire-god himself has brought her the news,... Again she speaks : she gives a vivid picture of the tumult and slaughter within the conquered city—and we remember the omen, and the anger of Artemis.'" The stages in which Clytem-

nestra has worked herself up for the murder reveal an image of the divine mother. The mythical pattern follows Demeter, the earth-mother, mourning for Persephone, until the cycle of seasons is established by her return (see ll. 1389-92).

All three women we have taken up for study were victimized by a patriarchal society. Clytemnestra was helpless to prevent the sacrifice of Iphigenia, an extreme action ordered by Agamemnon, and all for the sake of smoothing Menelaus' ruffled feathers. Medea sacrificed all she was born to in order to help Jason, asking only for his love, which, opportunist that he was, he forgot to give. While Clytemnestra and Medea took revenge on their erring male partners, Kannaki's despair welled up in a flood of turbulent emotion when Kovalan, her husband (as well as her 'child') was cruelly snatched away from her by an unjust order.

Medea realizes that she had been merely a tool in Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece, and that he had no intention of viewing her as an equal partner. Her pent-up emotions burst in a torrent that crushes not only Jason, but also his images in the form of his children (see ll. 112-14). Here the contrast is between two forces—Jason with his cultivated and rational outlook and Medea the true primitive energy with her unbounded capacity for loving or hating. Medea's life revolves round Jason. To her, he is husband and child. She proves this when she brushes aside her relationships with her father, brothers and children. True "she has her struggle with her maternal feelings—a theatrical struggle rather than a psychologically convincing one ..."⁹ The killing of the children represents in a sense the mother-goddess trying to restore order in a system of the life-death cycle that had become chaotic with the introduction of an artificial norm. The cold Apollonian nature of either Jason or Agamemnon does not serve to contain the Dionysian energies of Medea or Clytemnestra.

How do these maleficent characters compare with the idealized image of Kannaki? Kannaki is born, lives and loves under the noble tradition of the Chola banner, acquiring the highest acknowledged qualities of Indian womanhood. Clytemnestra, daughter of Tyndareus and Leda, is brought up in the Spartan tradition, free, strong-willed, almost masculine in thought and action. Medea, the Asiatic sorceress, had never learnt to hold her emotions in check. She was as impulsive and fiery as Clytemnestra was coldly calculative. But Kannaki was

the embodiment of suffering. Yet in spite of this difference of temperament, they flare up in the same way when the child is snatched away from them.

Cilappatikāram deals with the tragic triangle of Kannaki-Kovalan-Madhavi. Kannaki the devoted wife accepts Kovalan's involvement with Madhavi, the dancer, but erupts into a volcanic violence when she hears that the ruler of Madurai, Nedunchezhiya Pandian, has unjustly declared Kovalan a thief and condemned him to death. In her rage at losing Kovalan, she summons all the superhuman powers within her, and Madurai is burnt to the ground. Here one sees the matriarchal symbol combating the injustice of a patriarchal society, thereby proving that such an artificial state of affairs could serve merely to contain the original power of the divine mother, not erase it. Kannaki in this context sees Kovalan as her child. Ilango has subtly managed to convey this idea by leaving Kannaki childless, while Madhavi bears a daughter, Manimēkalai, to Kovalan. Thus the Dionysian principle, irrational and abandoned, stands for the wife, while the Apollonian, serene and sober, stands for motherhood. This again is cleverly projected by making Kannaki irrationally violent when her husband is killed, while Madhavi becomes calm and pious after the birth of Manimēkalai and her parting from Kovalan. As shown elsewhere, the conflict portrayed in *Cilappatikāram* between order and tension, between the universe and the individual, is only apparent, for ultimately one includes the other.¹⁰ There is a close interaction between the Apollonian and the Dionysian principles here, changing or coalescing as the situation requires.

Kannaki moves through various stages of the cosmic order. Born to happy circumstances in the Chola land, tragedy overtakes her in the Pandiya kingdom. She finds peace and adulation in the land of the Cheras. Birth, destruction and the ultimate merging with the cosmic powers—these are the basic principles of the life cycle found in the three phases of her life. A similar pattern emerges in the lives of Clytemnestra and Medea. Notably, in the climactic moments of their destructive fury, all three become representations of an avenging mother-goddess, finding within themselves superhuman resources to carry out acts that they could not have committed as essentially mortal women. In *Agamemnon*, *Medea* and *Cilappatikāram*, despair turns to revenge, drawing out all other human emotions. While Clytemnestra and Medea revelled in murder, Kannaki's curse conti-

nues to ravage Madurai with famine and disease until Vetrivel Chezhiyan sacrifices the lives of a thousand goldsmiths at the altar of Kannaki's temple (see Uraiperukatturai, paragraph 1).

The Greek religious experience was essentially different from the Hindu in that the Greek believed that the interrelationship between man and God always remained in a precarious state of balance. The Hindu believed in the power of prayer and that the love of God could assuage the effects of 'karma'. "What we miss in the Greek vision is the power of love (to transcend fate). The gods may have their favourites among men, but in moments of crisis they desert them.... Men may respect the gods and make friends with them, but there is nothing that can be strictly called a love of God."¹¹ Bowra sets the relationship of men and gods on a more moral plane than the Hindu's propinquity with his gods. To the Hindu 'karma', 'dharma', 'prema' and 'bhakti' provided straws to cling to while the Greek remained in abject fear of 'hybris', 'hamartia' and 'nemesis'. The basic difference between the Greek and Indian concept is clearly outlined. Kannaki transcends to divine love while Clytemnestra and Medea remain the symbols of revenge and destruction. Thus the chorus of Argives in *Agamemnon* are not entirely able to negate Clytemnestra's action in making Agamemnon walk on the tapestries which was guided by the curse that stalked through the house of Atreus. The crimes against the filial bond and his own iniquity are now reflected on the scion of the house. Caught between Zeus and Artemis, the patriarchate and the matriarchate, Agamemnon is now a puppet and Clytemnestra a puppeteer who leads him to his destruction. Kannaki, on the other hand, is all that is required of an Indian woman. She is dutiful, charitable and self-effacing. But like the curse on the house of Atreus, 'karma' or the crimes of a previous birth intervene in the placid life of Kovalan and Kannaki. Bharatan and Nili are inextricably bound in the coils of their sins. In their reincarnations Kovalan suffers for his hasty actions and Kannaki for her rage.

Strangely enough, the violently blood-thirsty revenge that is perpetrated by all three women is eventually condoned by the gods and an aura of finality is manifested with the emergence of the mother-goddess. The sway of the curse, 'karma' or 'hybris' is at an end and converges into the cosmic order. The final retribution therefore becomes the prerogative of the mother-goddess. Nemesis, it is to be remembered, is also a feminine symbol of disaster. All three works

are a passage from the artificiality of civilization to the spontaneous processes of the primordial being. "Behind all, there is the poet ... venturing into the very dark and danger of Clytemnestra to evoke her deep maternal power. There is the original paradox of fury, the memory that must avenge her children, and the matrix of her children who must avenge themselves on her."¹²

Clytemnestra was deprived of Iphigenia, Kannaki of Kovalan and Medea of Jason. How deeply the identification of the mother with the child is transferred to the husband, is shown in the description of Kannaki's life with Kovalan. Kannaki was always serene and sober, Kovalan restless and wayward. Here it is the Apollonian mother that, by love and surrender, absorbs the Dionysian energies.

Kannaki's protectiveness, Medea's possessiveness and Clytemnestra's vengefulness are all illustrative of Nature grieving for the destroyed procreative forces of life. Women contain the mystery of creation. Her destructive nature is a protest against the tyranny and injustice of patriarchal society. Maud Bodkin speaks of "the intensity with which the unsanctioned passion and anger of Dido asserts itself against her creator's loyalty to the patriarchal ideal, with its subordination of woman, and rejection of spontaneity in love."¹³ We find a similar process in the creation of Madhavi and Kannaki in *Cilappatikāram*. As a matter of fact *Cilappatikāram* seems to be a protest of the suppressed feminine instincts in man with reference to Tamil culture and imaginatively it recreates a matriarchal society against the tyranny of a patriarchal culture, and this tension between the imaginative structure and the social pattern is only an artistic equivalent as well as an answer to the battle in the unconscious of the people. All works of art dramatize certain conflicts in certain phases of human culture and attain a momentary synthesis also through dramatization. Throughout the epic, we find the tension between the suppression of women on the one hand and their real power over men on the other. And this was the consequence of the growing degradation of women in society.¹⁴ On the domestic level, motherly duties are trampled on by male domination. If Clytemnestra and Medea are mother-images, the maternal feeling in Kannaki is equally strong. Kovalan after deserting Kannaki becomes more of her child than husband. She meekly gives him all he wants, her only urge being to protect him and keep him comfortable. Kovalan himself sees Kannaki as Kotraval, the mother-goddess (see Vetturavari, ll. 45-51).

It is tempting to see a link between the Greek word *daimon* and the Tamil word *teyvam* and between the idea of youth predominant in the Greek *kouros* and the Tamil Murugan. *Teyvam* is seen here in the light of *daimon* rather than *dei*, implying that the retributive forces that permeate through human lives are inevitably divine as opposed to the concept of *theos* which in later times came to mean a singular omnipotent power far removed in its relationship to mortals. *Teyvam* is applicable to all things that are venerated, while *theos* signifies a divine dictator. The *daimon* that stalks through the house of Atreus, through the palaces and streets of Madurai and the lives of Kovalan and Kannaki, and through the tortured life of Medea, is in a special sense the all-pervading power that absorbs into itself its own instruments of justice, thereby converting them into a part of the divine order. In such a capacity Clytemnestra, Kannaki and Medea also become the sacred laws of the cosmic order which serve to wipe out the injustice of generations.

The links between the Greek tragedies and the Tamil epic are too strong to be brushed aside. There are references to actual contacts between the Greeks and the Tamils in the early stages of the evolution of the two cultures. But our comparative study is descriptive and not historical, and it shows how the tragic heroines in the two cultures are versions of the divine mother. However we should be cautious here. While Kannaki evolves through suffering not only into an instrument of fate but also a symbol of love and mercy and is actually worshipped by the king and others at the end, Clytemnestra and Medea remain the blind instruments of destiny, though they also become the symbols of cosmic power and energy.

NOTES

All line references made in this paper are to Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Euripides' *Medea* and Ilango's *Cilappatikāram*. The texts used are :

a. Richmond Lattimore trans., *Agamemnon*, in *Greek Tragedies*, eds. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore (Chicago, 1960), I ; b. Arthur S. Way trans., *Medea*, in *Euripides* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), IV ; c. Ilango, *Cilappatikāram*. (Tirunelveli, 1973). It is available in English translations done by Alain Danielou and Ramachandra Dikshitar.

- 1 "Comparative Literature : Its Definition and Functions", in Stallknecht and Frenz eds., *Comparative Literature* (Carbondale, Ill., 1973), p. 21.
- 2 "The Claims of Psycho-Analysis to Scientific Interest", *Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey *et al.*, Vol. XIII (London, 1913), p. 182.
- 3 See *The Mythic Image* (Princeton, N.J., 1974), p. 157.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 A. Zis, *Foundations of Marxist Aesthetics* (Moscow, 1977), p. 206.
- 7 Rhea is also identified with Cybele, whose rites are closely akin to Dionysian worship.
- 8 *Greek Tragedy* (London, 1939), p. 64.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 195.
- 10 See K. Chellappan, "The Architectonics of Cilappatikāram", paper presented at the All-India Tamil Teachers' Conference, Tiruchi, 1970.
- 11 C.M. Bowra, *The Greek Experience* (New York, 1957), p. 71.
- 12 Robert Fagles and W.B. Stanford, "The Serpent and Eagle", *Orestes*, trans. Fagles and Stanford (Penguin, 1977), p. 52.
- 13 *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* (London, 1963), p. 197.
- 14 See K. Chellappan, *Shakespeare and Ilango as Tragedians* (dissertation, Madurai University, 1975).

THE URDU PREMCHAND THE HINDI PREMCHAND

Harish Trivedi

I

Besides being acclaimed for his literary genius, Premchand (1880-1936) is accorded the unique distinction in Indian literary history of having founded and consolidated the modern novel in not one but two of our major languages, Urdu and Hindi. Yet, curiously, those who know the Urdu Premchand hardly acknowledge that he also moved on to write in Hindi, while those who know the Hindi Premchand like to pretend that Premchand did not even exist before he came to Hindi. Thus, in his pioneering and immensely influential history of Hindi literature (1929 ; rev. 1940), Ramachandra Shukla begins his discussion of Premchand with the Hindi short stories he published in 1916 while Premchand in fact had been publishing novels and short stories in Urdu since 1903 ; Shyam Sundar Das in his equally important work on Hindi language and literature (1930) describes the Hindi *Sevasadan* (1919) as Premchand's "first original novel" while in fact he had published five novels in Urdu before that ; and as late as in 1977, in the comprehensive 16-volume history of Hindi literature, we find the plain and forthright announcement that "The Age of Premchand" begins in 1918, again more or less with the Hindi *Sevasadan*.¹ Conversely, through some unconscious misappropriation, Syed Ehtesham Hussain writing in 1963 claims the Hindi *Godan* (1936) to be the Urdu *Gaudan*, which latter was in fact published three years after Premchand's death in someone else's translation only in 1939, while in sharp contrast, Masood Hussain Khan, for this very reason, wants to throw *Gaudan* out of Urdu literature altogether : "*Gaudan* has no place in the history of Urdu fiction." Similarly, Jafar Raza in a book published in 1983 insists throughout, against the force of much of the evidence he himself

cites, that Premchand went on writing equally in Urdu and Hindi to the end of his days, while Muhammad Sadiq, swinging to the other extreme in his magisterial *History of Urdu Literature* (1964 ; rev. 1984) cautions his readers : "It is not generally known that Premchand's novels have all been translated from books originally published in Hindi."²

Such partisan or purblind misrepresentations of the other Premchand are due probably to that secular piety or benign bigotry which has regulated most utterances in our century about the Hindi-Urdu or indeed the Hindu-Muslim question. It is the purpose of this paper to confront and critically appraise the indisputable facts that after having published five novels and approximately sixty short stories almost exclusively in Urdu over the first twelve years of his writing career, 1903 to 1915, Premchand moved steadily but surely towards Hindi, at first by publishing in Hindi journals some of his stories originally published in Urdu ; then, during 1918-19, by re-writing and publishing first in Hindi his sixth novel under the title *Sevasadan* while its original Urdu version *Bazar-e-Husn* lay unpublished for another four years in the lack of a publisher ; and finally, by settling down, starting with *Kayakalpa* in 1924, to write all his subsequent novels originally in Hindi which were then first published in Hindi as well. Though Premchand would occasionally, and only occasionally, write some of his shorter pieces, both fiction and non-fiction, in Urdu even beyond 1924, Hindi became overwhelmingly the vehicle of his major fiction after that date right up to his death months after the publication of *Godan* in 1936.

This linguistic transition effected over the middle decade of his writing career was of crucial significance for Premchand as a writer, both for the reasons that caused it and for the consequences that flowed from it. In what follows, an attempt is made to elaborate and analyze these causes and consequences in a not only strictly literary but also a wider linguistic, cultural, political and 'communal' perspective, in order to appreciate their full import.

II

Premchand himself explained time and again that the reason why he moved from Urdu to Hindi was that in Urdu there was a dearth of publishers, and that by switching to Hindi he would not only ensure

prompt and profitable publication but also gain many more readers. That he was only too right about this is borne out by the history of his publication throughout his career, as amply documented by himself in letters to his friends and editors.³

The point of interest here is that even ten or fifteen years before Premchand actually said so, i.e. around the turn of the century, it would have been preposterous to imagine that there could be a dearth of Urdu publishers for a writer of his abilities, especially in comparison with Hindi publishers. In the meanwhile, however, a lot had changed, as is borne out by the figures in the following tables.⁴

Table 1. Number of books published in U.P.
in Urdu and Hindi, 1881-1910

	1881-90	1891-1900	1901-10
Urdu	4380	4218	3547
Hindi	2793	3186	5063

Table 2. Number and circulation of newspapers
in U.P. in Urdu and Hindi, 1891-1911

	1891		1901		1911	
	No.	Circ.	No.	Circ.	No.	Circ.
Urdu	68	16,256	69	23,757	116	76,608
Hindi	24	8,002	34	17,419	86	77,731

The reasons for such a dramatic reversal can be traced back to the year 1837 when, together with the introduction of English as the official language at the higher levels, Urdu had been officially adopted as the leading North Indian vernacular so that everyone, whether Muslim or Hindu, simply had to learn it if he wanted to get on in the world. However, towards the end of the nineteenth century, Urdu found itself increasingly besieged by a persistent and populous demand for its optional substitution or even complete supersession by Hindi, and a fateful blow fell in the year 1900 when the government conceded the optional use of Hindi in the Nagari script for official and judicial purposes in U.P. The curt response of Lord Curzon, then Viceroy, to the protests against this decision indicates

his perception of the wider sectarian implications of this apparently innocuous issue : "The howls of Mussulmans merely represent the spleen of a minority from whose hands are slipping away the reins of power, and who clutch at any method of arbitrarily retaining them."⁵

This crucial breakthrough for Hindi had been achieved by the sustained efforts of many individuals and organizations spearheaded by the Nagari Pracharini Sabha (established 1893)⁶ which has been justly described as "a political promoter for the cause of Hindi"⁷ during this period. Shortly afterwards, in 1910, was founded the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, which developed and sustained very close links with the Indian National Congress at least until 1935, during which period Hindustani or Hindi gradually came to be adopted by the Congress as the *rashtrabhasha*, and not only as a vehicle of nationalism but indeed as one of its major planks, so that if one could not go to jail in the cause of *swaraj*, one could learn Hindi or wield the spinning wheel as the next best contribution to the great struggle. Finally, at a controversial meeting of the Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad at Nagpur in 1936, which Premchand attended and over which Gandhi presided, the Mahatma laid down the ruling that the language of the Parishad, and by implication the language of the country, was going to be not "Hindustani" in which the now much reduced Urdu could still have claimed a half-share, but "Hindi or Hindustani" in the Nagari script.⁸

That this struggle for supremacy between Urdu and Hindi had a strong economic dimension as well, again running broadly along communal lines, is reflected in a statement made by Bharatendu Harishchandra to the Education Commission for the North-West Provinces and Oudh : "If Urdu ceases to be the court language, the Mussulmans will not easily secure the numerous offices of Government, such as peshkarships, sarishtadarships, muharrirships, etc., of which at present they have a sort of monopoly."⁹ This proved prophetically true, as indicated by the statistics that the proportion of subordinate official jobs held by the Muslims in U.P., where they constantly constituted around 14% of the total population, went down from 63.9% in 1857 to 45.8% in 1886-87 to 34.7% in 1913.¹⁰

In the larger context of these inextricably interrelated linguistic, political and economic developments, it can be clearly seen that Premchand's switch from Urdu to Hindi was less an individual,

personal choice and more a historical compulsion, the larger inevitabilities of the age as felt by one of its more perceptive individuals on his own pulse.

III

Even at the specifically aesthetic and literary level, Urdu did not have, by way of a congenial literary tradition, much with which to hold Premchand back. It has been determined that of the fourteen major Indian languages, Urdu was distinctly the last to emerge out of its 'medieval' period into the 'modern'.¹¹ In fiction, there had been only two novelists of any note before Premchand, Ratan Nath Dar 'Sarshar' (1846-1902) and Abdul Halim 'Sharar' (1860-1926),¹² who again represented between them, as it happened, some of the fissures which were breaking up from within the reputedly 'composite' identity of Urdu language and literature. Sarshar, a Hindu, had in his *magnum opus*, *Fasana-e-Azad*, celebrated with great relish the common life of an incredible variety of people of the Lucknow of the Nawabs, while Sharar, in novel after novel set in the Spain of the *jehads* or the Arabia of the early centuries of the Muslim era, had attempted to revive the pristine glory of Islam in a mode of fiction which, in imitation of Hamlet's list of hyphenated hybrid literary forms, may well be called "the historical-fantastical-political".

So palpably different were these two contemporaries that sporadic skirmishes would break out between their respective supporters in the Urdu literary journals of the day, in which each party would argue for the superiority of its idol with an almost theological fervour and resourcefulness. When Premchand himself intervened in one such running battle in 1906 (in which Chakbast, incidentally a Hindu, had according to Premchand written a critically just account of Sarshar, in reply to which one Hakim Barham Sahab Gorakhpuri had not only run Sarshar down but also "extolled Hazrat Sharar to the high heavens"), he himself came down comprehensively in favour of Sarshar, and in the process once referred to his favourite writer not by name or pen-name but as "Panditji", as Sarshar was by birth a Kashmiri brahmin.¹³

The all-too-brief tradition of the Urdu novel which Premchand inherited had thus already developed communal overtones. Premchand's perception of the situation would have been especially acute,

for in the early part of his career he had been, even as he wrote in Urdu, something of a Hindu revivalist-patriot, as his early stories of Rajput or Bundelkhand valour bear out. In any case, the existence of a Hindu writer in Urdu had always been a rarity and something of an anomaly, and Premchand seems to have been conscious of it. In an astoundingly frank appraisal of his situation in 1915, he wrote :

I am now practising to write in Hindi as well. Urdu will no longer do ...
Has any Hindu ever made a success of writing in Urdu that I will ?¹⁴

To Premchand's anguished rhetorical question, a statistical answer has in fact been provided by Grahame Bailey in his history of Urdu literature, whose concluding chapter contains the following passage :

About 250 authors have been mentioned in this work. Apart from Prem Cand, ... only eight are Hindus, the rest are Muhammedans. The only famous writers among them are Daya Shankar Nasim, Ratn Nath Sarshar, and Durga Sahae Suroor. Hindu authors of real ability prefer to write in Hindi.¹⁵

Another more extensive history of Urdu literature further corroborates Premchand's sense of being an unwanted alien in the domain of Urdu literature, and it does so from the other side of the fence, as it were : "...this much will have to be admitted that Muslims continued to treat him more or less as an outsider."¹⁶

On the other hand, when Premchand did cross the gulf of this "cultural-communal divergence"¹⁷ to begin publishing in Hindi, he was welcomed on the other side with a warmth that was distinctly more than literary. In his "Preface" to Premchand's first book in Hindi, a collection of seven short stories under the metaphoric title *Sapta Saroj* (Seven Lotuses), Pandit Mannan Dwivedi Gajapuri wrote in terms highly redolent of Hindu culture :

Premchandji occupies a very high place among the Hindu virtuosos of Urdu literature.... It is a matter of joy that mother-tongue Hindi has of late attracted his heart. Premchandji has entered the Temple of Nagari to offer worship and the Mother has adopted this glorious loving son Prem by embracing him to her bosom.¹⁸

IV

So much for the apparently personal and straightforward but in fact highly symptomatic and complex historical reasons for Premchand's switch from Urdu to Hindi. We may consider now what the consequences of this switch were, that their significance was, and just how and where they are manifested in his works.

It may be argued that the consequence of Premchand's literary 'code-switching' was to effect a sea-change in him in the original connotation of that word, "a sea-change/Into something rich and strange."¹⁹ By moving to Hindi, Premchand would appear to have obtained a metamorphic release from an inappropriate and constraining literary situation, in which his own perceptions of life and his literary inclinations had run in one direction, while the grain of the language he had been trained to use by early education and social expectation, as well as the grain of the literary tradition inhering in that language, had run in quite another direction. The tradition of Urdu language and literature had throughout been urban and urbane, while Hindi, clearly more the language of the common folk at least at this stage of its evolution, related Premchand back to the only life he knew and which alone could form his proper subject-matter, his true quarry. Significantly, at the height of the Urdu-Hindi controversy at the end of the nineteenth century, Urdu had been described by its own partisans as "the language of refinement and of upper and civilized classes of people", and it had been urged to be "the duty of Government ... not to consult the whim of the peasantry" who were identified as the champions of Hindi.²⁰

In a broader perspective, Premchand's entry into Hindi, already emerging as the adopted national language, put him squarely in the mainstream of national life and nationalist politics. It is no coincidence that Premchand's active and practical conversion to Gandhian nationalism should have occurred almost right in the middle of the final phase of his other conversion from Urdu to Hindi which can be dated 1918 (when he completed the Urdu *Bazar-e-Husn*) to 1924 (when he started *Kayakalpa* in Hindi). On 15 February 1921, a week after he had heard Gandhi address a public meeting to promote Non-Cooperation in Gorakhpur, Premchand resigned the comfortable government job which he had held for twenty-two years. These two departures may be regarded as major turning points in his life and writing career. The sense of liberation that Premchand felt on

resigning government service is caught in all its thrill and exhilaration in two short stories he wrote within the next few weeks, "Lal Fita" (Red Tape) and "Vichitra Holi" (A Special Holi). The liberation that Hindi afforded him is captured not in one or two works that immediately followed but writ large over the rest of his career.

V

The significance of Premchand's switch from Urdu to Hindi can be best appreciated in the evolving context of his career seen as a whole. Some indication of the direction of this evolution may be had by looking briefly at his first novel and his first short story, both of course in Urdu ; at the transitional novel *Bazar-e-Husn/Sevasadan* and a short story from the same period ; and finally by outlining a pattern of thematic progression as reflected in the final phase of his career following *Sevasadan*, to which all his major novels belong.

Premchand's first novel, published serially in 1903-04, was *Asrar-e-Ma'abid* which title was later to be translated by its Hindi editor as *Devasthan Rahasya* and means the Secrets of the Sanctum Sanctorum. It is written in the sprightly, pert and even internally rhyming Urdu prose style which was generally current at the time and which Premchand had derived basically from his favourite, Sarshar. It has for its subject the moral degeneration of brahmin temple-priests and young Hindu widows, both of whom find religious worship a convenient pretext for the pleasures of the flesh. However, such is the dichotomy here between the received form and the intended content that an acute social evil never rises above being a lovers' ruse, and the tone that could have been expected to be scathingly reformist turns out to be merrily salacious.

Another remarkable feature of this work is an abruptly erupting purple patch in the middle of Chapter Two, which is as heavily loaded with Arabic and Persian as possibly any passage by any writer in modern Urdu prose. Here is a brief sample :

Is do angusht ki zabun men vo qoowat-e-goyal au zor-e-bayan kuja ki us qudarat-e-kamilaka ek shinma bhi mariz-e-bayan men la sake jlsake nahaz adna lshare pur yah gulzar sarapabakar wajoodpizir hua. Is deedu-e-kor men wah tezty-e-bisarat kuja ki us sana'at-e-ezadt ka mushahira kar sake jlsaki jat se yah gunagoon khilauqat zahuor men al.²¹

This goes on for nine pages and is meant to depict a self-contained episode involving the Hindu holy trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh ! The Hindi editor, obviously nonplussed by this passage, suggests that it is a parody of such a style, but of any such ironical intention there is not the slightest trace in the text. A more probable explanation for this oddity may be to regard it as a virtuoso piece performed by an unknown new writer in his maiden work in order to establish his credentials. And if it turns out to be a trifle overdone, it is because all such show-off performances are liable to be so if undertaken out of a sense of insecurity. Interestingly, in the very last year of his career as now in his first, Premchand once again produced a remarkably Persianized piece, this time meant to be delivered as a speech, because he had mistakenly assumed that his audience was going to be composed exclusively of highly literate Muslims. When one of the prospective audience quaked before such literary artillery at a pre-view, Premchand laughed one of his loud laughs and said : "Well, I said to myself—let me write a language that will show them ..." After a pause he added, "After all, I am the son of a kayastha, am I not !"²²

Premchand's first short story, "Duniya ka Sabse Anmol Ratan" (1907 ; The Rarest Gem in the World) begins, as per Urdu tradition, in a remote 'pan-Islamic' setting, with a languishing-lover hero and a cruel-mistress heroine stereotypically called Dilfigar and Dildareb—the kind of stuff that would have warmed the cockles of Sharar's own revivalist heart. But the denouement, curiously, is as heavily revivalist Hindu as the beginning was Muslim. In conclusion, it is the last drop of a dying Rajput warrior's blood which is acclaimed as the rarest gem in the world by both Dilfigar and Dildareb, while the point is deftly skirted that that particularly precious drop of Rajput blood might very likely have been shed in battle with a Muslim !

Of *Bazar-e-Husn* or *Sevasadan*, the transitional novel, the titles themselves are symptomatic of the shift in Premchand's sensibility. Amorous beauty and the market-place are highlighted in the Urdu title while in contrast, more austere concepts of home and social service constitute the Hindi title, for a novel which is substantially the same in both versions. The Urdu title promises one more variation on the popular theme of the life of a prostitute, treated sometimes naughtily and nearly always amorally in Urdu, as in Mirza Muhammad Hadi Ruswa's classic *Umrao Jan Ada* (1899), while *Sevasadan*

connotes an idealistic reformism as it also recalls by half-allusion such contemporary social reform organizations as the Bharat Sevak Samaj and the various Seva Samitis.

The radical transformation of the title is fully matched by innumerable minor, local but culturally consistent changes through which Premchand rendered this novel from Urdu into Hindi. Thus, in the opening paragraph of the novel, a reference to the "*pak daman*" of a character is replaced by plain "*satcharitrata*" in Hindi in the lack of a comparable metaphor, while a female character is described as "*satisaddhvi*" in Hindi when she was understandably no such thing in Urdu. Elsewhere in the novel, "*Bankebihari*" in Urdu (meaning Lord Krishna) is devoutly turned into "*Shribankebihariji*" in Hindi, "*begar-zana andaz*" becomes in an overkill of translation "*nishkama-bhava*", while "*majlis khatm hui*" becomes "*sabha visarjit hui*". "*Usne intezaam-e-khanadari ki nahin, khat-nafs ki talim pai thi*" is altered wholesale to become "*Usne grihini banane ki nahin, indriyon ke anandabhog ki shiksha pai thi.*"²³ The accumulative effect of numerous such changes is not only a Hindification of the Urdu version but, through subtle cultural connotations, also a Hindufication, which may seem artistically apt enough in a novel all whose major characters are Hindu, whose social ambience is comprehensively Hindu, and whose protagonist Suman is not only a Hindu but indeed a brahmin with a mother piously named Gangajali ! Conversely, the emotive significance of even the name Suman (which means 'flower' in Hindi) is liable to be lost in Urdu where it is so spelt that it can be read as the meaningless 'Saman'—which is indeed how one Urdu critic consistently refers to her.²⁴

In the same year as *Sevasadan* was published, Premchand sat down to write a short story for the Urdu magazine *Kahakashan* of Lahore but found, when he had finished it, that he could not really send it there. As he explained to the editor Imtiaz Ali Taj :

I have recently written another story, "*Atma Ram*".... It has turned out to be so utterly Hindu that it is not suitable for *Kahakashan*. I may take you to be a Hindu but your readers certainly are not Hindu.²⁵

This story is about an aged, devout village goldsmith, Mahadeva, who is attached above everything else in the world to a parrot eponymously and symbolically named Atmaram, thus literally embodying the popular Hindu belief that the soul, the *atma*, is like a bird which flies

out of the body upon death, as in the common Hindi phrase "*prana pakheru ur jana*." Mahadeva is best known in his village for chanting at all hours of the day and night two lines from his favourite *bhajan* : "*Satta Gurudatta Shivadatta Data/Rama ke charan men chitta laga*." The climax of the story occurs when Atmaram the parrot escapes from his cage and Mahadeva follows it high and low to try and tempt it back. As Premchand describes it in Hindi :

[The parrot] would now come and settle on the top of the cage, and now sit at the door of the cage and look at its bowls for food and water, and then fly off. If the Old Man was *moha* incarnate, the parrot was incarnate *maya*. This went on till it was evening. The struggle between *maya* and *moha* was lost in the darkness.²⁶

As can be seen, Premchand plays significantly here on some essentially Hindu concepts like *maya* and *moha* which can hardly be translated into any other language, and on submerged metaphysical metaphors as of the bird and the soul. No wonder the story proved to be a little too much for the Urdu-Muslim readers of *Kahakashan*. If Premchand was to go on writing more such stories when the spirit moved him to write them, he could hardly have gone on writing them in Urdu.

VI

In conclusion, we may survey briefly the distinct thematic development of Premchand after his transition to Hindi. His five Urdu novels before *Bazar-e-Husn* had been slight, formally derivative or undistinguished, and altogether less than successful, as Premchand himself later acknowledged. However, immediately after completing *Bazar-e-Husn* in May 1918, he began *Gosha-e-Afiyat* (first published as *Premashram* in Hindi in 1921), his first novel extensively concerned with peasant life, while his first short story with a peasant hero, "Balidan", also appeared in 1918. In his authoritative biography of Premchand, Amrit Rai has described with great vividness the process of sudden illumination through which Premchand now came to see that his true and proper theme, his forte, had not been the kind of urban-social issues he had written about before so much as it was the life of the villages and villagers which he himself knew best through upbringing and observation.²⁷

Next, and directly following his resignation from government

service, he produced his grand epic of the nationalist movement, *Rangabhumī* (1924), which remained till the publication of *Godan*, his own favourite among his novels. His next novel, *Kayakalpa* (1926), though it contains some twaddle about rebirth, also has his most forthright depictions up to date of the Hindu-Muslim communal riots. This was followed by *Nirmala* (1925-26), a poignant tale of suffering of a young wife mismatched to a man old enough to be her father, with stepsons old enough to be her lovers ; it is far more authentic in its attack on some aspects of Hindu society than any of his previous efforts in Urdu had been, such as *Hamkhurma-o-Hamsawab* (1906), *Kishana* (1907?), and *Jalva-e-Isar* (1912). Next came *Ghaban* (1931), a novel which is abruptly jerked away from excoriating another social evil, the greed for jewellery, into a sub-plot involving patriotic terrorists. *Karmabhumī* (1932) with its predominantly nationalist concerns, forms a companion piece to the similarly titled *Rangabhumī*, and finally came *Godan* (1936), that classic account of the subhuman misery, fatalistic resilience and crippling subjugation of the Indian peasantry. It is in these novels and the short stories of the later phase, so much more authentic than those of his first phase, that Premchand found the fulfilment of his true sensibility and genius ; it is in these works that the essence as well as the substance of his achievement lies.

In his *History of Urdu Literature*, published in the middle of Premchand's career in 1928, Grahame Bailey had prophesied of Premchand :

He will never attain the heights which are within his reach unless he goes back to his tales of the village life which he has lived, and the Hindu villagers whom he understands. Those tales alone ring true, and only they enable him to express his soul.²⁸

Thus, according to Bailey, the path to creative truth for Premchand lay through the lives of Hindu villagers. It needs to be added that Premchand's path to these Hindu villagers, as well as to the mainstream of national and nationalist life, lay through Hindi, and that it was only after his metempsychosis, the transmigration of his creative soul from one linguistic body to a more naturally appropriate one, that he fulfilled himself as a writer.

VII

The case of Premchand's transition from one language to another raises some further questions which may have implications of a wider, theoretical nature of some relevance to a comparative study of Indian literatures generally. Firstly, it prompts us to ask to what extent a writer's world-view is determined by the language he writes in, and whether such determination is more sharply highlighted rather than less so if the writer happens to be bilingual. Secondly, does a writer switching from, say, Oriya to Bengali, or from Gujarati to Marathi, require such pervasive cultural adjustments as were necessary for Premchand? If not, is Urdu then something of a special case among Indian languages, comparable in its non-Sanskritic non-Dravidic provenance and composition not to other Indian languages but, say, to Indian English?

Thirdly, since Premchand is not the only Indian author to have moved from a smaller and declining language into another more widely spoken and vigorous one in order to gain a little more money and many more readers, and since we have some Indian writers today who are probably making more money and winning more admirers in a more widely spoken language into which they are translated than in the smaller one in which they originally write, are we here studying in fact not one isolated case but a social and economic force of centripetal tendency, which may eventually prove to be of tremendous consequence in the development of Indian literature? And, lastly, is Premchand's case at all comparable to the cases of some foreign writers who have moved not only from one language to another but also from one country to another (or several others), and who may or may not have found the language of their later adoption creatively as congenial as their first language? Among the more notable of such writers are, of course, Vladimir Nabokov and Samuel Beckett.

NOTES

A slightly shorter version of this paper was presented at the 1st All-India Conference of the Comparative Indian Literature Association at the University of Delhi, 5 to 7 January 1984.

1 See, respectively, Ramachandra Shukla, *Hindi Sahitya ka Itihas* (Kashi, 1940), p. 505; Shyam Sundar Das, *Hindi Bhasha aur Sahitya* (Allahabad, 1930), p. 505; and *Hindi Sahitya ka Brihat Itihas* by several hands (Varanasi, 1977), IX, 129.

2 Both Syed Ehtesham Hussain and Masood Hussain Khan are quoted in Jafar Raza, *Premchand : Urdu-Hindi Kathakar* (Allahabad, 1983), pp. 262 and 271; Muhammad Sadiq, *op. cit.* (Delhi, 1984), p. 439.

3 See, for example, the extracts cited from his letters and the discussion in Amrit Rai, *Premchand : A Life*, tr. Harish Trivedi (New Delhi, 1982), pp. 103-04, 110, 125-26, 191, 205, 206.

4 Table 1 here is extracted from "Table VII" and Table 2 from "Table VIII" in Francis Robinson, *Separatism Among Indian Muslims* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 77 and 78. Robinson's source is the government publication *1911 Census, U.P., Part I*.

5 Curzon to Anthony MacDonnell (then Lt. Governor of the North-West Provinces, i.e. the present U.P.), 1 June 1900, quoted from the Curzon Papers in S. Gopal, *British Policy in India, 1858-1905* (Cambridge, 1965), p. 259.

6 For two illuminating accounts of the campaign for Hindi, written from distinct points of view, see Robinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-78, and Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 127-38.

7 John J. Gumperz and J. Das Gupta, "Language, Communication and Control in North India", in Anwar S. Dil, ed., *Language in Social Groups : Essays by John J. Gumperz* (Stanford, 1971), p. 138.

8 For a description of this meeting and the controversy arising from it, see Amrit Rai, *op. cit.*, pp. 354-57.

9 Quoted from the *Report of the Commission* (Calcutta, 1884), in Robinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.

10 See Brass, *op. cit.*, "Table 3.1", p. 143, and Robinson, *op. cit.*, "Table V", p. 46.

11 I am grateful to Sri Swapna Majumdar of Jadavpur University for showing me the Table that he has drawn up determining the 'Ancient', 'Medieval' and 'Modern' periods of the literatures of each of these languages, in consultation with *The Cultural Heritage of India* (Calcutta, 1978), Vol. 5.

12 A possible third could have been Nazir Ahmad (1836-1912), "if he could have been persuaded to write novels rather than improving tales."—Ralph Russell, "The Development of the Modern Novel in Urdu", in T.W. Clark, ed., *The Novel in India : Its Birth and Development* (London, 1970), p. 122.

13 See Premchand's essay "Sharar aur Sarshar" in Amrit Rai, ed., *Vividh Prasang* (Allahabad, 1962), I, 59-72.

14 Letter to Dayanarain Nigam, September 1915, quoted in Amrit Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

15 T. Grahame Bailey, *A History of Urdu Literature* (1928; rpt. Delhi, 1979), p. 102.

16 Muhammad Sadiq, *op. cit.*, p. 439.

17 Brass, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

- 18 "Pahale Samskaran ki Bhumika", in *Sapta Saroj* (1917 ; rpt. Calcutta, 1934). My translation.
- 19 Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, I.ii.400-01.
- 20 Anon., *A Defence of the Urdu Language and Character* (Allahabad, 1900), p. 69, quoted in Brass, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
- 21 *Char Laghu Upanyas* (New Delhi, n.d.), p. 33.
- 22 See Amrit Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 347. The speech was Premchand's presidential address to the first conference of the Indian Progressive Writers' Association held at Lucknow on 9 and 10 April, 1936.
- 23 The quotations here are taken from the Hindi *Sevasadan* (1919 ; rpt. Kashi, 1938), pp. 1, 19-20, 21 and 25, and from the corresponding passages from the Urdu *Bazar-e-Husn* (1923 ; rpt. Delhi, 1954).
- 24 This is Muhammad Sadiq, *op. cit.*, pp. 440-41, 444.
- 25 25 September 1919, in *Chitthi Patri* (Letters), ed. Amrit Rai (Allahabad, 1962), II, 107. My translation.
- 26 In Premchand, *Manasarovar* (Allahabad, n.d.), VII, 122-29. My translation.
- 2 See *op. cit.*, pp. 136-37.
- 28 *Op. cit.*, p. 101.

AGAINST THE PRIDE OF REASON LOOKING AT SWIFT THROUGH MONTAIGNE

Shirshendu Chakrabarti

I

Although it would be difficult to find a more representative author of the English eighteenth century than Jonathan Swift, attempts to define the precise quality of his vision and style directly on the basis of background and milieu have been rather unsatisfactory. Over and above originality, which he no doubt shares with Pope or Johnson, there is a uniqueness to his work that continues to grip and baffle his readers. He is in fact one of those few authors who have resisted our assiduous and ingenious efforts at classification. This haunting sense of elusiveness that characterizes his satire is perhaps deepened by the fact that he wrote with consistent and penetrating conviction against the growing tide of optimism in the latter half of the century. If his intellectual and spiritual roots are to be found anywhere at all, it is certainly not in his immediate milieu, but to some extent in the crisis of the Renaissance and the resulting intellectual revolution that found its distinctive expression in the scepticism of Montaigne.

That despite the distance in time, Swift and Montaigne might well have something in common, has been noticed by several critics, including Kathleen Williams, T.O. Wedel, Emile Pons and Irvin Ehrenpreis,¹ although none of them has cared to examine the relationship closely. There is no doubt that Swift had read Montaigne's essays. His library catalogue mentions a copy of the *Essais*, and references to the essayist are to be found both in his letters and those of Pope and Bolingbroke written to him.² Although there is no dearth of such items of evidence, they do not really establish any direct influence of Montaigne on Swift. Similar references are to be found in other writers of the age,

as the French essayist seems to have acquired already the status of a classic. At the same time, the evidence is far from negligible, as it implies that the kinship between Montaigne and Swift is not entirely fortuitous. Moreover, once the relationship is established, it is possible to take Montaigne's scepticism—his distrust of the power of reason and the scope and validity of knowledge—as a mode of entry into the world of Swift. The ensuing comparison is thus undertaken solely as an attempt to understand the *mentalité* of Swift and therefore does not preclude important differences between the two writers.

In *Apologie de Raimond Sebond* (1575-76, 1578-80), perhaps the most thorough-going example of his scepticism, Montaigne adopts in main the strategy of mortifying anthropocentric vanity by extolling the virtues and advantages of beasts. This ironic strategy takes its cue ultimately from Plutarch, in whose incomplete dialogue (named *Gryllus* after the protagonist), Ulysses discovers that even though Circe has no objection, the Greeks do not wish to become human beings again and hence furnish considerable arguments in defence of their preference for the bestial lot. While in Plutarch or in G.B. Gelli's *Circe* (1549) or in the *Apologie*, the paradoxical inferiority of man to beast constitutes the very soul of the work, elements of this technique are to be found in many other writers. George Boas in 1933 isolated this convention and christened it as 'theriophily': "The theoretical—if not psychological—basis of theriophily is that the beasts—like savages—are more natural than man, and hence man's superior."⁹ Animals are morally superior, because, guided by Nature, they are free from the dilemma of choosing or distinguishing between good and evil, right and wrong. They are also happy and psychologically stable because of the same reason. Gulliver's voyage to the country of the Houyhnhnms evidently extracts much of its subtlety and power from this theriophilic convention in literature and the latter could thus serve as the starting point of an exploratory comparison between Montaigne and Swift.

II

Theriophily manifests itself in the Renaissance as an essential feature of what has been called the "humanist critique of humanism",

as a reaction against the prevailing dogma of human supremacy fostered by both the Pagan and Judaeo-Christian traditions. From this standpoint, human vanity, being the product of anthropomorphic conditioning, does not have any absolute or general validity. Moreover, it stems from a deluded faith in the unique power and scope of the mind and its supposed primacy over the body. Man's inability to recognize and acknowledge his essential frailty—that he is a soul lodged within a finite, perishable and vulnerable frame—is the motive force behind the mind's habitual tendency to soar beyond its limits. Far from being an exercise in serious zoology, theriophily in both Montaigne and Swift constitutes an ironic exposure of the human capacity for self-deception. Pride is thus seen as our inveterate tendency to gloss over the stark reality of the human condition: "Presumption is our natural and original malady. The most vulnerable and frail of all creatures is man, and at the same time the most arrogant." Placed in the lowest part of the universe, the mire and dung of the world, he will nevertheless in his imagination go on "planting himself above the circle of the moon, and bringing the sky down beneath his feet."⁴

Man's claim to pre-eminence is founded on his faculty of reason, which is the specific property of the mind, and on his capacity for knowing and thinking. But as soon as we compare beasts with men, we realize that this ability turns out to be the chief source of moral and psychological instability, of unhappiness and evil. Animals are better served by their blind servitude to the laws of Nature than the vaunted, but intrinsically unstable power of human intelligence: "their brutish stupidity surpasses in all conveniences all that our divine intelligence can do." (II: 12, 333) Moreover, animals are in organic harmony with Nature and are hence enviably adapted to their environment. Although there is substantial affinity between beast and man in the physical mode of being, the differences are to the disadvantage of the latter. For, Nature—and this theme harks back to Pliny—is only a cruel stepmother to man, abandoning him to chance and fortune. It is thus tempting to complain "that we are the only animal abandoned naked on the naked earth, tied, bound, having nothing to arm and cover ourselves with except the spoils of others", whereas all other animals are provided for by Nature. It appears that no animal in the world

is exposed to so many injuries as man." (II : 12, 339) Montaigne, however, goes on to argue that Nature "has universally embraced all her creatures", and these complaints actually arise out of man's deluded sense of uniqueness towering above the order of Nature. Such pride being ingrained in our nature, Montaigne uses satire consciously as a moral weapon, stamping out the very roots of this vanity. His method "is to crush and trample underfoot human arrogance and pride ; to make them feel the inanity, the vanity and nothingness, of man ; to wrest from their hands the puny weapons of their reason." (II : 12, 327)

Baffling and elusive as he admittedly is, Swift comes very close to a similar forthright denunciation of self-deceived vanity at the end of *Gulliver's Travels*. The sight of mere knavery, folly or treachery does not upset his chilling equanimity, for they are "all according to the due Course of Things"—it is evil bolstered by pride, a sinister moral obtuseness that exasperates him :

But, when I behold a Lump of Deformity, and Diseases both in Body and Mind, smitten with *Pride*, it immediately breaks all the Measures of any Patience ; neither shall I be ever able to comprehend how such an Animal and such a Vice could tally together.⁵

Gulliver's sense of magnitude is jolted when he passes on from Lilliput to Brobdingnag, and when he returns to England, he considers everything according to the Brobdingnagian scale, everything, that is, except himself. In Book IV, when Gulliver refuses to acknowledge his affinity to the Yahoo even after the secret of his clothes is discovered, Swift's comic imagination subjects his self-esteem to a fitting retributive irony. For, stripped stark naked to bathe, Gulliver inflames the lust of a female Yahoo and is thus exposed in more senses than one : "For now I could no longer deny, that I way a real *Yahoo*, in every Limb and Feature." (HD, XI, 267)

Man's 'natural' inferiority to brutes is ruthlessly brought out when the Houyhnhnm master examines the limbs of Gulliver to his disadvantage and discomfiture. Although Gulliver seems not altogether so deformed as the Yahoos, in point of real advantage, he differs for the worse. For his nails were quite useless, and being biped he could not walk with any security. His feet were so soft that a covering made from brutes' skins was necessary to protect it

and in fact his "whole Body wanted a Fence against Heat and Cold", namely, clothes. (*HD*, XI, 242-43) Gulliver himself had earlier explained that men "always covered their Bodies with the Hairs of certain Animals prepared by Art, as well for Decency, as to avoid Inclemencies of Air both hot and cold." (*HD*, XI, 236) The brutelike Yahoos by contrast are much more adapted to Nature, digging holes with their nails and swimming like fish from infancy. Even in Brobdingnag the King's scholars conclude that Gulliver could not have been produced according to the regular laws of Nature, because he was not framed with a capacity for preserving his life, either by swiftness, or climbing of trees, or digging holes in the earth. (*HD*, XI, 103)

On this theriophilic theme, Swift seems to echo Montaigne when he refers to ill-grounded quarrels that we raise with Nature. In Brobdingnag, Gulliver discovers in the bedchamber of Glumdalclitch a book that treats of the weakness of man. The writer goes through all the usual topics of European moralists, "shewing how diminutive, contemptible, and helpless an Animal was Man in his own Nature ; how unable to defend himself from the Inclemencies of the Air, or the Fury of wild Beasts." So far so good. But rather than accept such limitations as simply the given conditions of our existence, the writer launches out into fantastic theories in order to account for that which by definition does not require accounting for. He invokes the myth of decaying Nature, which "could now produce only small abortive Births in Comparison of those in ancient Times." He further takes recourse to the fiction that originally men must have been much larger in scale, veritable giants "exceeding the common dwindled Race of Men in our Days." Unable to accept the natural weakness of man, even as he is engaged in writing homilies on the theme, the moralist succumbs to comforting illusion : "He argued, that the very Laws of Nature absolutely required we should have been made in the Beginning, of a Size more large and robust, not so liable to Destruction from every little Accident." The ultimate result of all this is, as the narrator intervenes to note, the growing tendency to construct a morality of discontent and repining. This comes from man's inability to remain within the bounds of Nature, from his sense of not being in harmony with it, denying thereby the mutually sustaining bond. Upon a strict enquiry, these quarrels that we

raise with Nature might be shown as ill-grounded among us, as among the Brobdingnagians. (*HD*, XI, 137-38) From somewhat similar assumptions, Montaigne in a more blunt manner exhorts and chastises man to recognize his position within the scheme of Nature : "Man must be constrained and forced into line inside the barriers of this order. The poor wretch is in no position really to step outside them." (II : 12,336)

III

Montaigne's caustic irony reveals the sinister implications of man's unique stature in the scheme of things, for he is the only creature whose vaunted ingenuity has invented and continues to develop war. Such is our moral obtuseness that we consider war "the greatest and most pompous of human actions". Far from being a proof of pre-eminence, it only bears testimony to our imbecility and imperfection. By contrast, "the science of undoing and killing one another, of ruining and destroying our own species, seems to have little to make it alluring to the beasts who do not have it." The irrational folly of war is perhaps most evident in the inane and trivial causes which stir it up and extinguish it. "All Asia was ruined and consumed in wars for Paris' lechery. The envy of one single man, a spite, a pleasure, a domestic jealousy, causes which should not move two fishwives to scratch one another—that is the soul and motive of all this great turmoil." Frightening armies are in reality composed of men, feeble, calamitous and miserable. The puniness and pettiness serve only to magnify and deepen the human capacity for viciousness. War is at once ludicrous and terrifying : "The same reason that makes us bicker with a neighbour creates a war between princes ; the same reason that makes us whip a lackey, when it happens in a King makes him ruin a province." (II : 12,347-49)

Swift's attack on war is not confined to theriophily. As early as *A Tale of a Tub*, war is exposed as the product of whims, fantasies and disorders of isolated individuals. Thus, the military preparations of Harry the Great of France proceed from unfulfilled lust. Similarly, the capricious devastation caused by the contemporary French monarch comes to an ignominious end when his moving spirits descend upon the anus into a fistula. Swift seems to echo

Montaigne's insight into the simultaneous absurdity and horror of war: "The very same Principle that influences a *Bully* to break the Windows of a Whore, who has jilted him, naturally stirs up a Great Prince to raise mighty Armies, and dream of nothing but Sieges, Battles, and Victories." (HD, I, 104) Swift retains this view of war as insane folly in *Gulliver's Travels*. In Lilliput, we are told of a violent quarrel at home between High-Heels (Tories) and Low-Heels (Whigs), and of war with Blefuscu on the momentous issue of the correct way of breaking eggs. Gulliver proudly launches into a panegyric on human ingenuity in war and the Brobdingnagian King is shocked not only at the implied moral apathy, but also at the bizarre combination of human frailty and conceited lust for power: "He was amazed how so impotent and groveling an Insect as I (these were his Expressions) could entertain such inhuman Ideas, and in so familiar a Manner as to appear wholly unmoved at all the Scenes of Blood and Desolation." (HD, XI, 134-35) The Houyhnhnm master is even more perplexed by war, because it is "a Science to which they are perfect Strangers." (HD, XI, 293) The causes include ambition of princes, corruption of ministers and the most trivial differences of opinion. In fact, any petty pretext is concocted to justify invasion, treachery and colonization. Hence, "the Trade of a *Soldier* is held the most honourable of all others: Because a *Soldier* is a *Yahoo* hired to kill in cold Blood as many of his own Species, who have never offended him, as possibly he can." (HD, XI, 246-47) That war is peculiar to civilized man, a product of his vaunted ingenuity is driven home with merciless and clinching finality, when the Houyhnhnm master discovers that, contrary to what he had inferred, man's natural inadequacies do not render him less harmful than the Yahoos. In fact, by abusing his faculty of reason, he only increases his capacity for destruction and consequently sinks well below the level of a mere brute.

IV

Theriophily not only strips man of his trappings of vanity, but thereby forces him to examine the very epistemological basis of his claim to supremacy. On what grounds does man equal himself with God or, more pertinently, separate himself from all other creatures? How

does he know the stupidity of animals that he attributes to them, for not only do they reveal their natural intelligence in organizing their lives and communities, but even in contact with men, they seem to have an attitude of amusement and indulgence : "When I play with my cat, who knows if I am not a pastime to her more than she is to me ?" If there is no communication between man and beast, whose fault is it ? "We do not understand them any more than they do us. By this same reasoning they may consider us beasts, as we consider them." (II : 12, 331) How do we in fact know that reason is a gift, as the evidence seems to point to the contrary ? Human beings are plunged in mental unrest and moral uncertainty because their natural-biological drives are inevitably at odds with the promptings of reason. As a result, man does not have mastery over his own kingdom even as he aims to master the universe. Montaigne shrewdly brings out the comedy of human grandeur stemming from infirmity : "Is it possible to imagine anything so ridiculous as that this miserable and puny creature, who is not even master of himself, exposed to the attacks of all things, should call himself master and emperor of the universe, the least part of which it is not in his power to know, much less to command ?" (II : 12, 329)

One is instantly reminded of the mental anarchy that is integrally related in *A Tale of a Tub* to the passion for dominating the twin worlds of matter and spirit, for conquering territories as well as philosophy and religion. No wonder that the formidable monarchs in the *Tale* are driven by urges (like sexual frustration) they are not aware of and are unable to master. In *Gulliver's Travels*, the erstwhile giant of Lilliput is humiliated by an unending series of ludicrous accidents and injuries in Brobdingnag, and yet such a feeble animal reveals a terrifying capacity for destruction. The ingenious triumphs of Laputa are stultified precisely because Laputian man does not know himself, is not aware that he is an amalgam of body and mind. Hence, even as he speculates on stars and planets, he becomes a not undeserving and ridiculous victim of open marital infidelity. In a similar way, Montaigne punishes the man who cultivates the mind or spirit to the exclusion of the body by exposing his inferiority to a wrestler or a muleteer in the domain of sexual love. (II : 12, 362-63) Gulliver's lack of self-knowledge is brought out subversively when he initially fails to recognize his resemblance to the Yahoo and is later forced to admit in "this abominable Animal,

a perfect human Figure." (*HD*, XI, 230) Even at the end of *Gulliver's Travels*, Gulliver remains very far from self-understanding, shocked by his own image reflected in a lake or fountain, distrusting Don Pedro, his compassionate saviour and even finding the company of horses preferable to that of his wife and family.

Human conceit in perhaps its most deep-rooted form is manifest in the admiration we cherish for our form and features. "Of all forms, the most beautiful is that of man ; so God is of that form." (II : 12, 397) This variant of self-love also has no basis in reality, for many animals are more beautiful than us. "And that prerogative that the poets make much of, our erect stature, looking toward heaven" is not exclusively ours ; camels and ostriches can make the same claim. Montaigne's pleasure at undermining our pride in physical beauty is evident : "Those that resemble us most are the ugliest and most abject of the whole band : for in external appearance and shape of the face, it is the apes ... for the insides and vital parts, it is the hog." (II : 12, 356) Montaigne literally strips man naked in his imagination and finds the effect somewhat revolting : "Indeed, when I imagine man quite naked, yes, even in that sex which seems to have the greater share of beauty, his blemishes, his natural subjections, and his imperfections, I think we had more reason than any other animal to cover ourselves." The comparison with animals once again throws light on our inability to accept the stark truth about ourselves : "Let us observe moreover that we are the only animal whose defectiveness offends our own fellows, and the only ones who have to hide, in our natural actions, from our own species." (II : 12, 356-57) The best antidote to amorous passion is the entire and open sight of the body which is the object and goal of our desire.

Gulliver finds the naked human form, including that of the fairer sex, very singular and deformed, when he first chances upon the Yahoos.⁶ His loathing turns into bewildered horror when, on closer inspection of the Yahoo, he discovers a perfect human figure in this abominable animal. His self-esteem shattered by this discovery, Gulliver nevertheless tries to cling on to the secret of his dress. A deep sense of shame is closely related to our inability to confront nakedness unflinchingly. Hence Gulliver agrees to strip in front of the Houyhnhnm master only if he did not have to expose those parts that Nature taught man to conceal. The horse, however, could not

understand why Nature should teach man to conceal what Nature had given, for "neither himself nor his Family were ashamed of any Parts of their Bodies." (*HD*, XI, 236-37) Because of the odiousness of their own shapes, the Yahoos hated one another more than they did any other animal. Yet the problem of self-deception seems to remain insuperable, for this odiousness "all could see in the rest, but not in themselves." (*HD*, XI, 260) As in Montaigne, the inexorable logic of exposure exhausts itself in nothingness; hence it is "not unwise in us to *cover* our Bodies, and by that Invention, conceal many of our Deformities from each other, which would else be hardly supportable." (*HD*, XI, 260)

V

As Montaigne perceives it, the power of thought and imagination enables man to distinguish between being and nothingness, appearance and reality, true and false, but only at the cost of rendering him vulnerable to sin and unhappiness :

if it is true that he alone of all the animals has this freedom of imagination and his unruliness in thought that represents to him what is, what is not, what he wants, the false and true, it is an advantage that is sold him very dear, and in which he has little cause to glory, for from it springs the principal source of the ills that oppress him : sin, disease, irresolution, confusion, despair. (II : 12, 336)

It is certainly an exorbitant price to pay for this subtle reason, this capacity for judging and knowing, if we have bought it at the price of this infinite number of passions to which we are incessantly a prey. Animals have no supererogatory appetites, for it is marvellous how little Nature needs to be content and how little she has left us to desire. Men on the contrary are driven by unnatural and immoderate desires that lead to diseases of both mind and body. We might recall here that the Houyhnhnms have very few desires and needs, that all the ailments of the Yahoos are caused by repletion, and Gulliver himself discovers in the land of the Houyhnhnms how easily Nature is satisfied. (*HD*, XI, 232) Being lame and blind, our reason not only makes us unhappy, but subjects us to an infinite confusion of opinions, so that men are in agreement about nothing, and reason itself has a very insecure seat within us.

The Laputians in *Gulliver's Travels* are victims of the subtle

enticements of reason. They excel in being insatiably curious and conceited in matters where we have least concern and ability. Because of this common infirmity of human nature, not only is their physical and instinctual life impaired, but they are "under continual Disquietudes, never enjoying a Minute's Peace of Mind." (*HD*, XI, 164) While their abstract, speculative reason produces on the one hand the Academy of Lagado, on the other hand, in the common actions and behaviour of life, a more clumsy, awkward and unhandy people is not to be found. Because of their chimerical experiments, the country lies barren and desolate, without even one ear of corn or blade of grass growing on it—a disastrous consequence of the conceited mind out of touch with the needs of the body. One perhaps ought to mention here that it is the body that rebels against the methods of the Mathematical School. The obvious contrast to the Laputians are the Brobdingnagians, who are incapable of grasping ideas, entities, abstractions and transcendentals. Their mathematics hence "is wholly applied to what may be useful in life" and it was their settled belief "that whoever could make two Ears of Corn, or two Blades of Grass to grow upon a Spot of Ground where only one grew before ; would deserve better of Mankind, and do more essential Service to his Country, than the whole Race of Politicians put together." (*HD*, XI, 136)

VI

As Montaigne argues adroitly, our reason can never give us knowledge or certainty, for all things produced by it, the true as well as the false, are subject to uncertainty and debate. This awareness of the relativity of human values and the collapse of absolute truths and objectively valid laws of being is further deepened by the radical instability of the human subject engaged in the act of knowing and understanding the world : "My footing is so unsteady and so insecure, I find it so vacillating and ready to slip, and my sight is so unreliable, that on an empty stomach I feel myself another man than after a meal." Perhaps due to "a thousand unconsidered and accidental impulses" within him, Montaigne finds the pace of a horse now rough, now easy and its shape now more, now less agreeable. (II : 12, 425).

The mind is thus not only inadequate, but irregular and unstable,

bent on its own subversion. Being an erratic, dangerous and heedless tool, it defies order and moderation, even though people try to bridle and bind it with religions, laws, customs, science, precepts, mortal and immortal punishments and rewards. In spite of all attempts to curb it, "we see that by its whirling and its incohesiveness it escapes all these bonds. It is an empty body, with nothing by which it can be seized and directed ; a varying and formless body, which can be neither tied nor grasped." (II : 12, 419) What is truly paradoxical is that it is only the sluggish and stolid mind that is secure and settled. After all, what unseats and casts the mind most commonly into insanity but its quickness, keenness, agility and in short its very strength ? Madness is imperceptibly near "to the lusty flights of a free mind and the effects of supreme and extraordinary virtue." "Countless minds have been ruined by their very power and suppleness." If you want a man healthy, disciplined and firmly and securely poised, you must "wrap him in darkness, idleness, and dullness." After all, "of what is the subtlest madness made, but the subtlest wisdom ?" (II : 12, 363)

Both man and the world which he tries to comprehend are in a state of perpetual flux, and the certainty of knowledge acquired through reason seems impossible : "nothing certain can be established about one thing by another, both the judging and the judged being in continual change and motion." (II : 12, 455) In this sceptical view, "we have no communication with being", because human nature is in a state of perpetual becoming. Trying to grasp its essence is like trying to grasp water. In this situation of universal flux and relativity of values, "reason seeking a real stability ... is baffled, being unable to apprehend anything stable and permanent." (II : 12, 455) Unrestrained and unbounded as Montaigne's methodical doubt is, it is for the very same reason only provisional, because by definition it can be applied to all values tentatively and does not imply final repudiation of all values. Such doubt is thus in fact an expression of a new kind of humanism, in so far as it derives the validity of all values and principles not from superhuman or supernatural sanctions, but from human foundations, however insecure they may be.

In his sermon "On the Trinity", Swift emphasizes the weakness and instability of the faculty of reason : "How often do we contradict the right Rules of Reason in the whole Course of our Lives ? *Reason*

itself is true and just, but the *Reason* of every particular Man is weak and wavering, perpetually swayed and turned by his Interests, his Passions, and his Vices." (HD, IX, 166) The grand maxim of the Houyhnhnms to cultivate reason and be wholly governed by it, does not apply to man. For among us, reason is inherently problematical, giving rise to relativity of truths, "where Men can argue with Plausibility on both Sides of a Question." It does not strike us with immediate conviction, but suspends us in uncertainty, because it is inevitably "mingled, obscured, or discoloured by Passion and Interest." (HD, XI, 267) The consequent breakdown of absolute values is admirably manifest in the fiction of Lilliput and Brobdingnag. The giant of Lilliput becomes a mere midget in Brobdingnag and speculates consciously on this transformation: "Undoubtedly Philosophers are in the Right when they tell us, that nothing is great or little otherwise than by Comparison." (HD, XI, 87) While this might well be a reference to George Berkeley's *An Essay towards a New Theory of Vision* (Dublin, 1709), the conditional nature of human values and ideals is a theme that can be seen as early as *A Tale of a Tub*, where Curtius "leaps into a Gulph, from thence proceeds a Hero" because he chose "a proper Juncture", while "Another atchieves the same enterprise, but unluckily timing it", was called a mad man. (HD, I, 110-11)

It was in the *Tale* again that Swift articulated his awareness of the insecurity of reason and the consequent fluidity of the self. This is brought out with structural irony in the narrator's confession that his imagination is "exceedingly disposed to run away with his *Reason*", which is "a very light Rider, and easily shook off." (HD, I, 114) The mind's tendency to outstrip its own limits is admirably suggested in Sections VIII and IX of the *Tale*. It naturally sallies out, till having soared out of its own reach and sight, with the same course and wing falls down plum into the lowest bottom of things. The narrator's very attempt to describe this habit of the mind is itself an exercise in ingenuity that expresses itself in a crescendo of similes and then suddenly collapses in abject failure: "whether after all these *Metaphysical Conjectures*, I have not entirely missed the true Reason." (HD, I, 99) The language itself thus becomes an embodiment of the very principle of rise and fall that it seeks to elucidate. The barrier between reason and madness is thin not only in the *Tale*, but also in the *Travels*, where, for example, Gulliver's experience in the land of

the Houyhnhnms—which forms a valid mortification of man's pride in reason—prompts him to a state of absurd misanthropy. In *Thoughts on Various Subjects*, Swift argued that the differences between a mad man and one in his wits, as far as speech was concerned, consisted in this :

That the former spoke out whatever came into his mind, and just in the confused manner as his imagination presented the ideas. The latter only expressed such thoughts, as his judgment directed him to chuse, leaving the rest to die away in his memory. And that if the wisest man would at any time utter his thoughts, in the crude indigested manner, as they come into his head, he would be looked upon a raving mad. (*HD*, IV, 49)

The proximity between wisdom and insanity, arising out of the over-reaching instability of the mind, makes credulity a more peaceful possession of the mind than curiosity. (*HD*, I, 109)

Apart from plunging us in uncertainty, our inadequate reason only aggravates our vicious tendencies. The Houyhnhnm master, alarmed by the devastation of war, "dreaded lest the Corruption" of reason that man pretends to, "might be worse than Brutality itself." "He seemed therefore confident, that instead of Reason, we were only possessed of some Quality fitted to increase our natural vices." (*HD*, XI, 248) The horse's final verdict is more or less the same. He looked upon men as a sort of animals to whose share "some small Pittance of *Reason* had fallen, whereof we made no other Use than by its Assistance to aggravate our *natural Corruptions*, and to acquire new ones which Nature had not given us." (*HD*, XI, 259) Gulliver himself in his misanthropic alienation is in substantial agreement with this view.

At the same time, reason is never rejected outright. Even in his *Thoughts on Religion*, Swift argues "that every man is bound to follow the Rules and Directions of that Measure of Reason which God hath given him." (*HD*, IX, 161) Man is not *animal rationale*, but only *rationis capax* ; he has the capacity for reason. Throughout the final Book of the *Travels*, despite the baffling and shifting world of values and certainties, Swift drives home the notion of a measure or pittance of reason that cannot be the basis for vanity. Gulliver is said to imitate a rational creature, since he shows appearances or rudiments or glimmerings or some small accidental pittance or some tincture of reason. We ought to be able to accept this finite faculty without pride and use it even as we use

any one of our limbs, "which no Man in his Wits would boast of, although he must be miserable without them." (*HD*, XI, 296) This awareness of the limits of the mind, implicit in our being able to use it like a limb, not beyond its specific capacity, seems to recall Montaigne's conclusion to the *Apologie*: "to make the handful bigger than the hand, the armful bigger than the arm, and to hope to straddle more than the reach of our legs, is impossible and unnatural." (II : 12, 457) Man can have no knowledge because his mind is infirm and unstable, but we need to have some knowledge in order to know that we know nothing; it is precisely our awareness of the mind's limits that presupposes and affirms a certain measure of knowledge. This is the crowning paradox that ultimately spans the centuries between Montaigne and Swift and holds them together in spirit.

NOTES

1 Kathleen Williams, *Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise* (London, 1959); T.O. Wedel, "On the Philosophical Background of *Gulliver's Travels*", *Studies in Philology*, XXIII (1926), 434-50; Emile Pons, *Swift: Les Années de Jeunesse et le 'Conte du Tonneau'* (Paris: Strasbourg, 1925); Irvin Ehrenpreis, 'The Meaning of *Gulliver's Last Voyage*', *A Review of English Literature*, III (1962), 18-38.

2 See Sale catalogue appended to Harold Williams, *Dean Swift's Library* (Cambridge, 1932); Harold Williams, ed., *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, 5 Vols. (Oxford, 1963-65) I, 40-41, 415; III, 264, 348.

3 *The Happy Beast* (London & Baltimore, 1933), p. 1.

4 *The Complete Works of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (London), II, 12, 330-31. All subsequent references to this edition are incorporated in the text, after each quotation. References have been confined to the *Apologie* for reasons of convenience. The reader would certainly find similar views in *Of Cruelty* (1578-80), *Of Pedantry* (1572-78), *Of Cannibals* (1578-80), *Of Experience* (1587-88) and *Of the Vanity of Words* (1572-80).

5 *The Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Herbert Davis et al., 14 Vols. (Oxford, 1939-68), XI, 296. All subsequent references to this edition (abbreviated form: *HD*) are incorporated in the text, after each quotation.

6 Similar exposure of the illusory foundations of eroticism forms a central strategy in much of Swift's verse.

THE PERIODIZATION OF INDIAN LITERATURE

A PROBE INTO THE PROBLEMS OF LITERARY HISTORY

Swapan Majumdar

I

Tutored willy-nilly in the British schools of ideas for nearly two hundred years, it is nothing but natural that we would induct the English pattern of historiography here without even questioning the plausibility of such induction. Yet there is no denying that the urge to record the development of literature in terms of history is but itself a western phenomenon, and like many other phenomena had begun to be practised by us only after our direct and involved contact with the West. In the West, again, the concept of a history of literature was directly borrowed from history along with all its methodologies and analogies. That is, a non-art formulation was engrafted on qua art, including literature. The possible fallacies of such corroboration and the emphasis on wrong ends, however, excited historians of ideas on the Continent only after the World War I. Theodor Lessing, Oswald Spengler, Johan Huizinga, Karl Heussi, Georg von Below—to name only the most eminent few—apprehended the coming of a crisis of historicism. It was from them that the historians of literature took their cue and a differentiation with regard to Time between History and Literature, of course as arbitrary as any premise is to begin with, was tried out. They found that history reorganized the past processes of change embedded in a temporal frame, while the history in literature tended to reassess the response to an experience contained in a literary work against the backdrop of a contemporary milieu, as a result of which literary history turned out to be an act of literary theorization as well. That is, in a historic period Time is restrictive and diachronic, in a literary one continuative and hence synchronic.

This hypothesis, however, implied a reconsideration of the

triangular relationship between Author, Reader and Work. And it was precisely on this score that the essential distinction between a history of literature and a literary history rests. A historian of literature is more concerned with the social functions of literature – that is, with the audience's participation in response to a work of art. A literary historian, on the contrary, finds more challenge in the alchemy of production and representation, that is, in the creative process of an individual author. Now the relative importance of any one of the three further divides the company of theorists into several factions. Some read a dialogue between an author and a reader through the medium of a text ; some put the author and the reader, as it were, on a see-saw—at times the author catering to the tastes of the reader, the reader at other times complying with whatever the author supplies ; some—no less important—see the text mostly as the product of a socio-economic structure where the roles of both the author and the reader are virtually relegated to the order of an instrument and nothing more.

Be a Formalist, a Socialist or a Genetic-Structuralist—whatever position one assumes, the unique role of a reader vis-a-vis a theoretician becomes the decisive factor in literary history, for with regard to literature a theoretician is first of all and above all a *reader*. A historian living in a distant time—and maybe also a distant place—reconstructs only the facts of a time, but can never re-live a similar experience. On the other hand, a reader's reception to a text does not end with an instantaneous reaction but arouses in him an accumulated 'survival' of comparable emotions preserved through reading as well as gathered from life. Literary activity, then, is comparative at base. A literary historian's avowed responsibility therefore is not merely to amass facts or to chronicle the data of publication history, but to sift these materials in such a way that a complexion, a modality, a tenor may come out of it in full relief. Without reassessing the issues and themes evolving in a philosophy of literary history, it would not be judicious for a student of literature to cross-examine the validity of the existing tenets of periodization or to advance an altogether new frame.

The concept of periodization presupposes a change within a temporal frame. A period is a unit to measure the range of such changes. One might even detect the presence of the Christian myth of order forged out of chaos as the moving force behind such an

attempt. And the Enlightenment in its zeal to place things in a proper order endowed the idea of change with a value viz. progress. That is, a degree of change is attributed a value in order to give it a name and an identification. A popular notion exists that periodization dispenses with the cross-currents flowing perspicuously within a time-span and consequently classifies these as a type. On the contrary periodization exposes a diversity of literary activities and ideas in actual proportion to or as a deviation from the dominant attitude reflected in a temporal continuity. That also involves a value judgment, but only as a matter of degree, scale and aspect. Now again, since value judgment pivots round a norm, the act of periodization too is apt to be at bottom comparative.

The primary problem of periodization, then, is not certainly one of dividing and sub-dividing a given span of time, but rather to devise what criteria should be the rationale of such a conceptualization. Yes, criteria, and not *a* criterion ; for as a tool it must change in keeping with the nature of the period, varying from country to country, from epoch to epoch.

What, then, should be the criteria of periodization ? Is it only a temporal closeness that puts authors and works together ? Or a formal, else a thematic affinity ? A question of cultural integrity ? Does it consist in linguistic unity ? A matter of regional identity ? Or do some common beliefs bind them ? Or is it the similarity of the creative process that brings them to a cluster ? Creativity, so far as it is a psychic process in an individual, should of course vary from person to person ; yet in the infra-structure there is and ought to be a lowest common denominator that makes the genesis of a work congenial. But we need to be alert at this point. If a certain work or a cluster of works happens to be written in a particular period, it may be an evidence by itself ; but it is never the incontrovertible reality with regard to the work or works, as the case may be, that such works are necessarily produced only in such a given situation. That is to say, literature defies to be ruled by causal conditions, its tendency is to elude such formulations. But even then, literature is hardly, if ever, written solely for personal satisfaction ; an author does and must have as a matter of fact an ideal audience/reader constantly at the back of his mind who *may be—to begin with—someone of his own likeness*. And it is precisely

this interaction between these two forces within that I think constitutes the only valid rationale for periodization.

II

The foremost stumbling block that assails the job of an Indian literary historian with doubts is the lack of ascertained dates which constitute the basic structure of a history. As a result we are forced to be content with notional dates provided by other branches of knowledge, especially philology. Even there, the hangover from the oral tradition till quite late makes the detectable features of language blurred and hazy.

The rationale of periodization in Indian literatures has been almost as diverse as the deities in Hindu pantheon. Some are drawn from political events ; some are based on religious ones ; reigns of sovereigns provide the basis for some ; meteoric personalities sometimes constitute the connecting thread ; some are derived from the preponderance of a literary form ; cultural movements are good criteria for some ; some even consider the places of origin as valid grounds for clustering. In the midst of such a confusing array of points of view, the objective itself seems to have been lost.

While dealing with Indian Literature I think it is desirable and thoughtful that the uniqueness of the cultural contours be taken full care of. Genetically, we know, no culture ever allows the disciplines of another to be applied blindfold to it. First of all, unlike the constituent countries of Europe the regional literatures of India do not enjoy a sovereign status. But that does not mean that a concept of Indianness has to be imposed on them at the cost of their language-oriented identity. It implies that the periodic modality in respect of Indian Literature has to be horizontal while the regional literatures are supposed to provide the vertical axis for the structuring of the historical matrix.

Secondly, periods in European literatures are related to one another, it seems, on the principle of the third law of thermodynamics. Reason and sensibility recur, as it were, respectively with the Classical Age-Renaissance-Enlightenment-Age of Progress on the one hand and the Age of Faith-Reformation-Romanticism on the other affecting the continuity invertedly. But the massive wholeness of Indian Literature not only abides in a simultaneous order but also

composes a simultaneous existence, which extraneously looks like stagnation. Progression in the literatures of the two lobes then differ as much in speed as in direction and in effect cannot be classified by the same parameter of periodization.

A conscious endeavour in the periodization of Indian Literature began with the western indologists. Their centre of attraction, nevertheless, was the Sanskrit language and literature and most of them being philologists, their efforts were directed to discovering a common source for all languages. Even so, literature benefited from their researches. But obvious as it were, Sanskrit literature became tantamount to Indian Literature for them—the titles of their works vouchsafe for their attitude. Sanskrit certainly dominated the Indian literary scene from the early years of recorded history almost uninterruptedly down to the 10th century, but it is also known to a modern scholar that the early works in Tamil encroach upon this period. Periodization on the basis of linguistic unity then is not a full-proof method in the Indian—not even in the medieval Indian—context. Secondly, if we assign the entire ancient period of Indian Literature to Sanskrit and begin the medieval period with the works of the emerging regional literatures, then what had so far been reckoned as the ancient or early phase in the perspective of a single language-based literature, as well as all the following ages, will have to be pushed one stage down. But that lands a literary historian in further trouble.

Seen from a language-oriented point of view, it appears, the decay of Sanskrit and its concomitant culture and the gradual rise of the regional languages are but disjointed moves of history. But a close look into whatever meagre biographical details are available make it rather clear that the founding fathers of regional literatures were one and all extremely proficient in Sanskrit learning. Patronized by the court and delimited by several bindings on usage by the people at large, the scope and area of operation for Sanskrit had been gradually shrinking. I think it will not be rash to surmise that either by choice—maybe allured by popularity as well—or by royal wishes poets opted for compositions in their mother-tongues. The Cheras or the Cholas in the South or the Senas in the East were certainly great promoters of popular culture among the masses, but almost as a matter of prestige and pedigree admired the erudite Sankritic culture at the courts.

Contiguity, we know, has ever been a hall-mark of Indian culture. The simultaneous and co-lateral growth of religious poetry in the regional languages that produced devotee-poets like Basavesvara in Kannada (12th c.); Baba Farid in Panjabi (12-13th c.); Jnanadeva in Marathi (13th c.); Tikkanna in Telugu (13th c.); Namdeva in Marathi (13-14th c.); Candidasa in Bengali (14th c.); Lall Ded in Kashmiri (14th c.); Vidyapati in Maithili (15th c.); Kabir in Hindi (15th c.); Narasi Mehta in Gujarati (15th c.); Banda Nawaz Gesu Daraz in Urdu (15th c.); Mirabai in Rajasthani (16th c.); Surdas in Brajabhasha (16th c.); Sankaradeva in Assamese (16th c.); Haba Khatoon in Kashmiri (16th c.); Ezhuttacchan in Malayalam (16th c.); the Panca Sakhas in Oriya (16th c.); Akho in Gujarati (17th c.); Kshetrayya in Telugu (17th c.); Tukaram in Marathi (17th c.); Vemana in Telugu (17th c.); Shah Latif and Sachal Sarmast in Sindhi (18th c.); Tyagaraja in Kannada (18-19th c.); Dayaram in Gujarati (18-19th c.); or the long illustrious line of poets in Tamil from Andal (8th c.) down to Tayumanavar (18th c.)—also proves beyond doubt that ideational mobility in India had never been disrupted and to view any of them in absolute seclusion is to place him in a distorted perspective. It is quite typical of Indian culture that multiple stripes have weaved the plait of its tradition, comingling at times and dissociating at others but seldom losing its track. To highlight *one* dominant note from it would be in all likeness to give free play to one's bias and preference.

It is only during the last decade and a half or so that the idea of Literary History has been made current in the Indian academic circles. But it has been nothing better than a new tag festened to the conventional History of Literature, because the term has not been consolidated as yet by a conceptual frame emerging from the Indian literary context itself. That by replacement of terminology we have gained very little becomes all the more obvious when we look at the mode of periodization still persisting in histories of Indian literatures. For most of the historians of literature in India to date the essential difference between a period in history and a literary period does not seem to be quite clear. They cling to a time-span not because an intrinsic trait or spirit of the age is revealed to them but for the simplistic quantifying device that facilitates their narration of the story of a literature. In more ways than one, Grimm's schematic triad of Ancient/Medieval/Modern is still the safest clutch for any essay in

historiography. And in the Indian context that corresponds fairly well to the politico-religious ages. Thus the Ancient Age matches with the Hindu Period, the Medieval equates with the Muslim and the Modern is co-terminus with the British (and implicitly Christian) era. Linguistically also the three ages tally with the dominance of Sanskrit, Persian and English respectively, if not among the masses at least at the courts. But do not such canons, even though the intention be different, smack of a communal point of view? Furthermore, if we insist on such a pattern a fourth period covering the recent years will have to be consequently added as the Russian historians Antonova-Bongard-Levin-Katovski have already done in their *History of India*. But that would be a deviation from both the tripartite division as well as the underslung religious justification. It is also to be noted that Buddhist and Jaina literatures and/or literatures written in Pali, Prakrit or Apabhramsa have all been taken within the fold of Sanskrit/Hindu literature in this scheme.

It may be useful here to scrutinize the more or less accepted norms of periodization of Indian literatures with the help of a chart.

	Ancient/Early	Medieval/Middle	Modern/Late
Assamese	1300-1500	1500-1800	1800-
Bengali	950-1350	1350-1800	1800-
Gujarati	up to 1450	1450-1850	1850-
Hindi	up to 1300	1300-1850	1850-
Kannada	up to 900	900-1800	1800-
Kashmiri	1200-1500	1500-1800	1800-
Malayalam		1350-1800	1800-
Marathi	up to 1350	1350-1800	1800-
Oriya	up to 1500	1500-1800	1800-
Panjabi	up to 1600	1600-1850	1850-
Sindhi	up to 1000	1550-1850	1850-
Tamil	BC 600- 600	600-1850	1850-
Telugu	1000-1400	1400-1850	1850-
Urdu	1400-1700	1700-1875	1875-

[collated from *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Volume V. The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, 1978]

Now a close a look at it makes a few things clear. Whatever attempts have so far been made to periodize the literatures of India, the

aperture and frame of reference for the historians happen to be primarily their own regional literatures. What appears to be nominal variations in point of periodization finally result in a chaos. For example, the Bhakti literature in Assamese according to such periodization would fall under the ancient period ! The early phase of Malayalam does not reach the corresponding time-span of other Indian literatures. Some five hundred years appear to have dropped out of the chronology of Sindhi literature without disrupting, as it were, its continuity ! What is projected as the ancient age of Urdu is but medieval in the rest. But strikingly enough, the modern phase is marshalled to commence mostly around 1800, which is not only arbitrary, but dotted along a pre-conceived date-line that hardly conforms to facts. The time-span of the modern age contains in itself practically all the processes from the 'Renaissance' down to the 'Modernist' in the breadth of hardly two hundred years !

If we cross-examine this chart comparatively with another table showing the advent of generic forms like Drama and the Novel the reading would be absolutely confusing.

	<i>Drama</i>	<i>Novel</i>
1841 [Marathi]	Vishnu Amrit Bhave, <i>Sītā-svayamvara</i>	1857 Baba Padmanji, <i>Yamunā-paryāṣana</i>
1852 [Bengali]	Taracaran Sikdar, <i>Bhadrārjun</i> Govindacandra Gupta, <i>Kīrtivilās</i>	1865 Bankimchandra Cattopadhyay, <i>Durgeshnandini</i>
1853 [Hindi]	Bharatendu Hariscandra, <i>Satya Hariścandra</i>	1870 Govindanarayan Misra, <i>Devrānī Jethānī</i> <i>kī Kahānī</i>
1856 [Urdu]	Wazid Ali Shah, <i>Rahas (Rās)</i>	1878 Ratannāth Sarsār, <i>Phasūnā-e-Azad</i>
1157 [Assamese]	Gunabhiram Barua, <i>Rāmnavamī</i>	1894 Rajanikanta Bardoloi, <i>Mirijlārī</i>
1860 [Telugu]	Karod Ramcandra Kavi, <i>Mañjarī Madhukariyam</i>	1872 Narahari Gopālkrṣṇa Ceṭṭi, <i>Śrī Raṅgarāju-carit</i>
1862 [Gujarati]	Ranchodbhui Udayram, <i>Jaykumārī-vijay</i>	1866 Nundankur Mehta, <i>Karaṇ Ghelo</i>

1870	Mirza Kalim Beg,	1890	Parmanand Mevaram,
[Sindhi]	<i>Khursid</i>		<i>Zinat</i>
1880	Ramsankar Ray,	1901	Phakirmohan Senapati,
[Oriya]	<i>Kāñcī-Kāverī</i>		<i>Cha Maṇa Āṭha Guṇṭha</i>
1891	Sundaram Pillai,	1896	Rajam Aiyar,
[Tamil]	<i>Manomaniam</i>		<i>Kamalāmbal Carittiram</i>
1895	Basavappa Sastri,	1899	Gulbadi Venkata Rao,
[Kannada]	<i>Surasena-carit</i>		<i>Indirā Devī</i>
1923	Kirpa Sagar,	1898	Vhai Vir Singh,
[Panjabi]	<i>Raṇjit Siṅgh</i>		<i>Sundarī</i>
1938	K. Damodaran,	1887	T.M. Appu Netungati,
[Malayalam]	<i>Paṭṭabākī</i>		<i>Kundalatā</i>
1969	Motilal Kemu,	1950	Amin Kamil,
[Kashmiri]	<i>Trunov/Maṅgay/Mañjuli</i>		<i>Gati Mabi Gas</i>
	<i>Nikā</i>		

[based on the lists prepared by Prabhakar Machwe in *Sandarbh Bhāratī* (Hindi), VII, 1 (Jan-March 1981), p. 32 and 2 (April-June 1981), p. 38]

Now if this table be relied upon, no room for critical exposure is provided in this pattern. The correlative order of the two genres also betrays the chronological thesis. Should all these authors from Vishnu Amrit Bhawe to Motilal Kemu come under the chiaroscuro of modernism, the term itself would be threatened of being too baggy and bloated a definition. Theorization apart, seen from an endogenous point of view how could we classify authors like a Mohan Rakesh, a Badal Sarkar, a Vijay Tendulkar, a Girish Karnad or a Manik Bandyopadhyay, a Thakazi Sivakankar Pillai, a Sivaram Karanth, a U.R. Ananthamurthy in the same category or would they call for a separate categorization altogether?

III

Considering the pros and cons of the issues raised, I find no less than four valid cycles, periodic as well as perpetual, in Indian literature, viz. :

- 1 Literature of Royal patronage : Literature of the Court
- 2 Literature of Religious patronage : Literature of the
Templeyard

3 Patronage of the Reading Public : Literature in Print

4 Patronage of the Entrepreneur : Literature for the Media

Adivasi and folk literatures too which so far did not have an access to our literary histories can be brought under these heads. I presume, if subjected to annalistic periodization for the sake of minuter details, this structuration would still stand valid and pragmatic. But such a literary history needs the specialized services of inter-disciplinary scholars and can never rely upon the expertise of individual polyglots alone.

Paper read at the All India Comparative Indian Literature Conference organized by CILA & the University of Delhi, 5-7 January 1984.

I am indebted to Dr Amiya Dev and Sri Sankha Ghosh for suggesting improvements on the primary draft. If it still remains ephemeral the onus rests absolutely with me.

DHVANYĀLOKA of Ānandavardhana. Critically edited with Introduction & Notes by K. Krishnamoorthy, with a foreword by K.R. Srinivasa Iyenger. Delhi : Varanasi : Patna : Motilal Banarsidass. 406 pp. Rs. 50.

Contrary to the view expressed by a formidable array of eminent scholars—like Jacobi and Kane—K. Krishnamoorthy holds that the *karikā* and the *vr̥tti* of *Dhvanyāloka* were composed by the same person, Ānandavardhana. The evidence adduced by the author may not be conclusive and final ; it is nevertheless sound and interesting. Incidentally, the author investigates the question, somewhat suprising presumably for non-academic readers, whether the original title of this celebrated treatise was *Dhvanyāloka*. The question arose because some later writers on the subject referred instead to *Sahṛdayāloka* (or *Kāvyāloka*). This latter title led to a further controversy : whether the “sahṛdaya” was used as a general term meaning a perceptive critic, or as a reference to the author himself.

All this however seems a minor matter when one turns to the major issues raised by the book itself : *Dhvanyāloka*. It is a difficult book which needs, if any book ever did, a sound introduction, and for readers alien to the language as well as to the tradition, a good translation. The present author has given us both, and something more besides and hardly less important : a carefully edited and painstakingly authenticated text, with unfailing mention of all the extant variants in abundant footnotes.

After discussing, in the excellent introduction, the controversies about the title and the authorship of *Dhvanyāloka*, Dr Krishnamoorthy goes on to deal with the major issues ; to expound, above all, the central concept of the book, *dhvani*. His exposition of this subtle and difficult concept has the luminous clarity of one who thoroughly knows his subject. But this is not all ; there is something else which seems to me of crucial importance. It is the way he approaches his subject. What I mean is that the author's evident—and perfectly justified—admiration for the freshness and

brilliance of this supreme criterion of literary excellence does *not* lead him to set it apart and exalt as a unique and solitary phenomenon ; for he does not for a moment forget that Ānandavardhana, with all his subtlety and profundity of aesthetic perception belongs to a long-established and distinguished tradition. The present author relates the dhvanikāra (Ānandavardhana) to this tradition which the latter does not, as one may tend to suppose, repudiate but assimilates and subsumes under a wider, deeper and more fundamental concept. This is clearly shown by Ānandavardhana's attitude to the literary concepts dominant in this tradition : alaṃkāra, guṇa and riti. As for the oldest of these traditional aesthetic concepts, *rasa*, Ānandavardhana not only accepts it but goes so far as to declare it as the supreme object of all dramatic and literary art. In this view, continuity is at least as important as novelty and originality. This, it may be objected, is characteristically, and incorrigibly Indian ; but so was Ānandavardhana, with all his refreshing and stimulating originality.

This is for the introduction—very necessary and valuable. Now for the major, and by far the most arduous part of his job : translation. The job of the translator, particularly in a modern European language, is rendered difficult by several factors. First, the text is often doubtful ; it is no easy matter, when confronted with a bewildering plurality of possible or actual readings in different versions, to single out the authentic one. When the most likely, and therefore presumably authentic, text is finally selected, the task of the translator becomes somewhat easier from the logical point view.

The language of the *kārikās* is simple and direct ; hence comparatively easy to render. What is needed here first of all is an adequate, and as far as possible, faithful rendering of the technical terms. This need has been admirably fulfilled. I give a few examples : vācya = expressed ; vyaṅgya = suggested ; pratiyamāna — implicit ; saṃśaya = perceptive critic ; alaṅkāra = [suggestive poetry] of undiscerned sequentiality ; vivakṣitānyaparavācya — of intended but further-extending literal import.

The most difficult part of the job of the translator is not however the rendering of either the *kārikās* or the *vr̥ttis* ; it is the verse rendering of the numerous illustrative quotations that occur in the *vr̥ttis*. The author has rendered these delightful śloka—some

of them are by Ānandavardhana himself, using both Sanskrit and Prakrit as his medium—in verse form. We should be disappointed if we looked for poetry in them, but amply rewarded if we read them as what they really are : faithful and fairly accurate translations of originals that are characterized by a vernal felicity, a density and elegance hard to reproduce in a modern analytical language like English. Let us take an example, from Kālidāsa :

Evāṃ vāḍini devarṣau pārśve pituradhomukhī
Līlākamalapatrāṇi gaṇayāmāsa pārvatī.

As the divine sage said this,
The down-faced Pārvatī by her father's side
Counted the petals of the toy-lotus
She held in her hand.

The translation has the merit of being close to the original, and therefore dependable. But it is not poetry ; it has only the semblance of a metrical pattern. It is much better when one comes to the prose commentary (*vṛtti*) that follows. I quote a few lines below.

Here, the idea of counting lotus petals is conveyed expressly and it (i.e. the expressed meaning) subjugates itself in communicating the second idea, namely, bashfulness, one of the passing moods, without taking the assistance of the denotative words at all. This cannot be regarded as an instance of suggestion with undiscerned sequentiality (na cāyamalakṣyakramavyaṅgyasyaiva dhvanervīṣayaḥ). Only those contexts where sentiments etc. (rasādi) are made known by the descriptions of the situational stimuli, responses and the passing moods which are themselves expressed by so many words (vibhāvānubhāvavyābhicāribhyo rasādīnāṃ pratītiḥ) will serve as proper instances of suggestions...

This is not only dependable but admirable, though conscientious fidelity to the original may at times have rendered the style a trifle pompous ; accuracy of reproduction here is, however, too important to be sacrificed for verbal elegance.

This quotation brings us back, irresistibly, to the introduction. I have in mind here the author's remarks on the modern relevance of *Dhvanyāloka*. He mentions in particular a salient feature in the *vṛttis* of *Dhvanyāloka* which strikes him as a brilliant anticipation of an eminently modern trend in literary criticism in the

West : "practical criticism", explication of a poetic text. The remark is interesting ; it shows real critical insight ; it shows further, that the author, K. Krishnamoorthy, is not only a sound scholar but—a much rarer phenomenon—a genuinely perceptive critic, a *sahṛdaya*.

Debiprasad Bhattacharyya

Omkar Kaul, *Kashmiri aur Hindi Rāmkaṭhā Kāvya kā Tulanātmak Adhyayan* (A Comparative Study of the Rāmkaṭhā Kāvya in Kashmiri and Hindi). Chandigarh : Bahri Publications, 1974. x+348 pp. Rs. 40 / 50.

Ever since the publication of the late Father Camille Bulke's epoch-making research work in Hindi on the genesis and growth of the Rāma legend in India, literary scholars all over the sub-continent have been attracted to the splendour and variety of the regional *Rāmāyaṇas*. Ostensibly, Vālmiki's epic was a mere take-off point for the regional poets ; right from the days of Kamban in Tamil (c. 885 AD) down to Amarnath in Kashmiri (1940) they sought to give vent to their own moment and milieu. Their native town often replaced the city of Ayodhyā, Daśaratha's royal palace became a magnified depiction of their local landlord's residence, the nearby rivulet was all they could imagine of the river Sarayu, nor were the people of Ayodhyā in any way different from their own kinsfolk ; yet they hardly, if ever, deviated from the ethos of Vālmiki. In short, they used the age-old story of Rāma's life only, as it were, to measure the extent to which the Kali Yuga had drifted away from the Satya Yuga.

Dr Omkar Kaul's comparative study of the Kashmiri and Hindi *Rāmāyaṇas* is an important contribution to this field. The vast sway of the Rāma story on the Indian mind irrespective of the caste, class or religion, can be best seen in the instance of Kashmiri *Rāmāyaṇas*. We learn from Dr Kaul that in Kashmir the *Rāmāyaṇa* was made available even in the Persian script, and that too not brought out by any non-profit-making literary academy but by a commercial

publisher, Ali Muhammad & Sons. It had run into three editions by 1974.

So far we knew of only one version of the Kashmiri *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Prakāś Rāmāyaṇa*, made known to scholars through G.A. Grierson's edition published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Father Bulke too drew his conclusions on the basis of this edition alone. But Dr Kaul has dwelt on five other versions as well, viz. *Śaṅkar Rāmāyaṇa*, *Ānand Rāmāvatārcarit*, *Viṣṇupratāp Rāmāyaṇa*, *Śarmā Rāmāyaṇa*, *Tārācānd Rāmāyaṇa* and *Amar Rāmāyaṇa*. This discovery of primary material has greatly added to his credit. The author has also broadened his scope by including *Rāmcaritmānas*, *Rāmcandrikā* and *Govind Rāmāyaṇa* from Hindi.

Another aspect marks his investigation. Rather than taking the *Rāmāyaṇa* for a kind of scriptural text, he has tried to discover the folk sources, patterns and pressures that were responsible for the making of the poem in the northernmost regional language of India. To complement the process of acculturation the author has also traced the residue of the Rāma story in the folk literature of Kashmir. From a later chapter it becomes clear that with regard to the language, the rhyme and *alaṅkāra* patterns the poets had access to both the erudite as well as the popular traditions. In fact, the regional *Rāmāyaṇas* stand unique in this respect : these were born at a point of intersection between these two levels running concurrently throughout the middle ages. Because of its close tie with the norms and values of daily existence the *Rāmāyaṇa* was one up over the other epic, the *Mahābhārata*, till before the advent of the modern age.

The scheme of the book deserves a close scrutiny. If its lay-out is proved to be comprehensive it may serve as a model for future comparatists working on similar projects in parallel languages. The first chapter traces the origin of the Rāma legend in Hindi and Kashmiri folk literatures. A short background to the works under research is provided in chapter two. A Kāṇḍa-wise comparison between the two language *Rāmāyaṇas* comes in three and occupies a substantial part of the book. Of course the Kashmiri *Rāmāyaṇas* are his primary concern and he has emphasized only such details as are found in the regional versions. The next four chapters deal respectively with characterization, religious and moral values, elements of *rasa* and poetic patterns. In fact, nearly half of the book is devoted to these. There is also a conclusion.

Products primarily of the bhakti tradition, the vernacular *Rāmāyaṇas* have exalted Rāma often to the status of a god and that too at the cost of his rival characters, ultimately his devotees in the disguise of enemy. A balance to some extent has been maintained in respect of minor characters though they do not seem to have been rescued from obscurity either. For the most part the Kashmiri *Rāmāyaṇas* follow Vālmiki, yet deviations are also of no less magnitude ; e.g. Sitā is born to Mandodarī, Sitā is abandoned because a picture of Rāvaṇa is discovered on her, Vālmiki is the father of Kuśa, Rāma performs the funeral rites for his dead father. The very nature of these deviations, however, testifies to a later date of composition. Virtually every author or translator emphasized its moral and religious contents rather than its simple human aspects. Bhakti, thus, is the moving force behind these *Rāmāyaṇas*. Besides, one cannot deny the presence of some aesthetic assumptions, if not strictures, relating to bhakti and common to all the literatures of medieval India. So Dr Kaul's treatment of bhakti as a separate *rasa* is absolutely justified.

Dr Kaul has done a comparative study ; but it seems to be comparative mainly in scope—a cross-linguistic area with a common traditional source. So far as the methodology is concerned, he has not used the comparatist's tools. Had he done that, he would have easily dispensed with his last but four chapters and replaced them with observations on more relevant issues like the oral-written traditions, the impact of non-literary mores or even sub-literature on the remnants of the purāṇic tradition, whether Vālmiki too survived only by virtue of his literary fortune or if the medieval poets were taking recourse to a kind of 'creative treason' by interlarding their own faiths and beliefs in the substratum of the primary epic. In other words, a comparatist's job is not to narrate the differences but to relate them at the same time to the micro as well as macro waves of thoughts, beliefs and ideas prevalent in the then milieu. In short, his business is also to investigate the why's and what's of literature. Had Dr Kaul's method been thoroughly comparative, his findings too would have been more pointed and sharp. Yet Dr Kaul has done a splendid job by paving the way for future researchers. He has done the tabulating, let them do the speculation now.

Swapan Majumdar

Rāmprasād Sen, *Grace and Mercy in Her Wild Hair*, Selected Poems to the Mother Goddess, Translated by Leonard Nathan and Clinton Seely. Great Eastern, Boulder, Colorado, 1982. \$ 7.00.

Translation is generally meant for the readers in the receiving language. A translator's success ultimately depends on the response and reception of this type of readers. But there are some people who belong to the source language and are acquainted with the target language as well. For any translator these readers are difficult to satisfy. They expect every piece of translation to be as good and faithful as the original though they know it very well that exact equivalents are not always available. The vocabulary of a language is the product of a particular social environment. Moreover, even when a word for word translation is possible, some words may have more than one meaning, some words may have regional associations or mythical allusions. There may even be some words, particularly in religious songs of an esoteric cult, whose original meanings are lost. I entirely agree with Edward Thompson's view on *Śākta Padāvalī*, "Many Bengalis would not understand every allusion, even in Ramprasad." (*Bengali Religious Lyrics: Śākta*, The Heritage of India Series, Association Press, YMCA, Calcutta, 1923) Take for example, the widely used word in Bengali (a loan word from Sanskrit) 'ṣaḍyantra'. It now means 'conspiracy'; the original Tantric association is hardly understood by the common people. It previously meant six Tantric ways of overpowering an enemy ('māraṇa', 'mohana', 'stambhana', 'vidveṣaṇa', 'uccāṭaṇa', 'vaśikaraṇa'). Many more instances can be given from the *Śākta Padāvalī*.

So a translator is not necessarily always a traitor, he is sometimes a helpless compromiser. Whatever we may have against the translator, it is undeniable that world literature thrives on translation.

Leonard Nathan and Clinton Seely's rendering of the songs of Ramprasad Sen into English is a glorious example of what translators can achieve with dedication and competence. The present reviewer's mother tongue is Bengali and he has some knowledge of English. So he belongs to that category of difficult readers who will always compare the translated version with the original. It is said that

good poetry rarely survives in translation. But devotional songs are harder to recreate in a foreign language, because it is not merely a question of translating a song, but also involves the transplantation of an alien culture or of a different religious system. So the translator's job here is twofold : to retain the musical quality and the universal appeal of the original and second, to remain faithful as far as possible to the original connotations of the words. Leonard Nathan and Clinton Seely have achieved both in *Grace and Mercy in Her Wild Hair*.

Clinton Seely needs no introduction to the scholars of Bengali literature. He has written an exhaustive biography of Jibanananda Das. He is now working on the life of Madhusudan. He is also engaged in translating *Meghanādbadh Kāvya* into English. He is a specialist in both medieval and modern Bengali literature. His method of translation is :

A specialist in the original and one or more poets in the receiving language work together through various stages : a deliberately prosaic translation with notes, a verse translation, criticism of this, revisions, until the participants are satisfied—the specialist that the English version strays from the original as little as possible, the poet that the final draft is a poem.

The method has worked very well. It is not to suggest that the translators have not taken any liberty with the words in the original. Song no. 54 which gives the book its title may be cited as an example. The last four lines in Bengali are as follows :

নিৰ্বাণে কি আছে ফল, জলেতে মিশায় জল ।
ওরে, চিনি হওয়া ভাল নয় (মন) চিনি খেতে ভালগাসি ॥
কৌতুকে প্রসাদ বলে, করুণানিধির বলে—
ওরে, চতুৰ্গ করতলে, ভাবিলে রে এলোকেশী ।

In the English rendering we find :

... and what's this salvation
If it swallows the saved like water
In water ? Sugar I love
But haven't the slightest desire
to merge with sugar.

Rāmprasād says with amazement :
 Grace and Mercy in Her wild hair—
 Think of that
 And all good things are yours.

The translators have left out the word 'caturvarga' which has a special meaning. 'All good things' might be a bit misleading too. Edward J. Thompson and Arthur Marshman Spencer in *Bengali Religious Lyrics : Sākta* used the word 'Four Goods' for 'caturvarga' and added a footnote: "*The Four Ends or Objects of Pursuit : Dharma* (religious merit or duty), *Artha* (wealth), *Kāma* (physical desire), and *Mokṣa* (liberation of the spirit from bondage)." Readers might be interested to know how Thompson and Spencer translated these lines. This is their version :

What is the worth of salvation if it means absorption ; the mixing of water with water ? Sugar I love to eat, but I have no wish to become sugar.

Prasād says joyously : By the power of grace and mercy, if we but think on the wild-locked Goddess, the Four Goods become, ours.

The reviewer thinks that neither 'amazement' nor 'joyously' is a happy choice for 'কৌতুকে' ! Anyway, we should not overemphasize one or two minor points.

The *Śākta Padāvalī* is an offshoot of many religious interactions in our country like the Bhakti Movement, Tantrism and Vaisnava doctrines. This filial form of worship may be influenced by the *vātsalya rasa* of the Vaisnava theology. But whatever might be the source of origin, this mother and child relationship between a goddess and a devotee is something unique. S.K. De has rightly pointed out that "these poets realize in the emotions of the child the emotions of a devotee. Like the child, the poet is now grave now gay, now petulant, now despairing, not with the capricious purposelessness of a child but with the deep intensity of purposeful devotion." (*Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd edn., Calcutta, 1962). Precisely for this reason the *padakartās*, particularly Ramprasād's, "illustration is racy, from the soil and of the soil ; it comes from the life of an agricultural people." (Thompson) Nathan

and Seely have been able to bring the fragrance from an exotic culture. All the songs of Ramprasad are associated with the rural life in Bengal, all the imageries are borrowed from everyday life. It must have been a challenge for the translators to keep the flavour of the original. Their predecessors Thompson and Spencer tried to be faithful, but their translation was in prose. But these translators' aim was to transmit the poetic quality as well. Their success is evident from the following quotations :

Bengali	English
a. গেল দিন মিছে রঙ্গ-রসে আমি কাজ হারালেম কালের বশে ॥ যখন ধন উপার্জন, করেছিলেম দেশ-বিদেশে তখন ভাই বন্ধু দারা স্তত সবাই ছিল আমার বশে । এখন ধন উপার্জন, না হইল দশার শেষে ।	I spent my days in fun, Now, Time's up and I'm out of a job, I used to go here and there making money, Had brothers, friends, wife, and children Who listened when I spoke.
সেই ভাই বন্ধু দারা স্তত, নির্ধন বলে সবাই রোষে ॥ ষমদূত আসি শিয়রেতে বসি, ধরবে যখন অগ্রকেশে	Now they scream at me Just because I'm poor. Death's Fieldman is going to sit by my pillow
তখন সাজায়ে মাচা, কলনী কাচা বিদায় দিবে দণ্ডি-বেশে ॥ হরি হরি বলি, শ্মশানে কেলি, যে যার গাবে আপন বাসে, রামপ্রসাদ মলো কান্না গেল, অন্ন খাবে অনায়াসে ।	Waiting to grab my hair and my friends And relations will stack up the bier, Fill the pitcher, ready my shroud and say So long to the old boy In his holy-man's get up They'll shout Hari a few times, Dump me on the pile and walk off That's it for old Ramprasad They'll wipe off the tears And dig in to their supply.

(Song 1)

b. জাল ফেলে জেলে রয়েছে বসে।
 ভবে আমার কি হইবে গো মা,
 অগম্য জলেতে মীনের আশ্রয়।
 জেল জাল ফেলেছে তুদনময়
 ও সে যখন বারে মনে করে,
 তখন তারে বরে কেশে।
 পালাবার পথ নাইকো জালে,
 পালাবি কি মন ঘেরেছে কালে,
 রামপ্রসাদ বলে মাকে ডাক,
 শমন দমন করবে এসে।

The fisherman has cast his net
 And sits there waiting, waiting.
 What will become of me,
 Mother, in this world ?
 The fish are safest
 In deep waters.
 The fisherman has cast this world
 As his net.
 When he sees what he wants
 He grabs it by the hair.
 There's no way out, so, Mind,
 What will you do, bound by Death?
 Rāmprasād says : call the Mother,
 She can handle Death.

(Song 5)

One of the most famous songs by Ramprasad is 'মা আমার ঘুরাবে কত ?'
 It has many Tantric references and the translators have done a good
 job. But I have one question. They have rendered the following
 lines

তুমি কি দোষে করিলে আমার
 ছ'টা কলুর অঙ্গুগত ॥
 আশী-লক্ষ যোনি ভ্রমি পশু পক্ষী আদি ষত,
 তবু গর্ভধারণ নয় নিবারণ বাতনাতে হলাম হত।

into English as

...What have I done to be forced to serve
 These Six Oily Dealers, the Passions !
 All these births—eighty times 100,000—
 As beast and bird and still the door
 Of the womb is not shut on me.

(Song 9)

How to pronounce 100,000 ?—one lakh or hundred thousand ? Some
 Indians may like to read it as one lakh, whereas the general readers
 in the West are not familiar with the word 'lakh'.

There is an excellent introduction giving the background of the
 Sakti cult in Bengal. On the whole *Grace and Mercy in Her Wild
 Hair* is a significant contribution to the Indo-American literary and
 cultural relations.

Subir Ray Choudhuri

1 The first Comparative Indian Literature Conference

The Comparative Indian Literature Association (CILA) and the Department of Modern Indian Languages, University of Delhi organized an All India Comparative Indian Literature Conference at Delhi this winter, on 5-7 January 1984. Some one hundred and fifty delegates participated in it, both outstation and local. Ten sessions were held, more than one of which had simultaneous seminars. The themes were spread over a wide area, from the general "CL: Concept Approach Method" and "Literary History" to such particular ones as "Literature and Society", "Tradition : Modernity" and "Language Interactions". There was also a session devoted to "Translation and other Tools". Besides there was a session for creative writers on "The Idea of an Indian Literature" in which the discussion was initiated by Amrita Pritam and was followed up by Yoginder Paul, Rajendra Yadav, Raj Gill and Keshav Malik. In another session Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya too spoke on "Indian Literature". And in yet another, the concluding, Professor Nagendra spoke "In Defence of the Theory of Rasa" as common Indian aesthetics. Apart from this consideration of the notion of Indian literature and the theoretical papers on CIL, there were also a number of case-studies putting CIL into practice. The whole proceedings were conducted by Professor Sisir Kumar Das of the University of Delhi and the President, CILA. The deliberations during these three days, and the enthusiasm, proved for certain that CIL was solid theory as well as sound pedagogy. With the national CL convention last year at Jadavpur and this CIL conference, it is clear the CL has finally developed into an academic movement in this country. Better late than never.

2 The Chandigarh Seminar

Almost as a follow-up of the Delhi conference in January, on 26-27 March, the Bhai Vir Singh unit of the School of Panjabi Studies at Punjab University organized its ninth annual seminar on the "Literary Renaissance in India", on the theme of "CIL and National Integration". The purpose was not merely to consider the essential centripetal nature of CIL, but to take up the question of its actual praxis. How should we go about in order to establish university departments of CIL or Institute CIL as an integral unit of the various literature

departments ? What should be a possible CIL syllabus, or rather, on what rationale should a CIL syllabus be formulated ? These were some of the questions that were raised. The proceedings were conducted by Dr V.N. Tewari, Bhai Vir Singh Professor of Panjabi at Panjab University.

3 The International Translation Conference

At about the same time, on 15-20 March, the School of Languages of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi organized an international conference on "Literature in Translation". It was magnanimously planned and was equally magnanimously conducted, with delegates from some thirty countries including an impressive African and Chinese contingent, and papers totalling some five hundred. The areas covered were also diverse : "theoretical aspects of literary translations", "problems of translation of world classics", "the aesthetics of literary translation", "cultural identity and the problems of cross cultural communication" and "problems of adaptation". The participants included both practitioners and theoreticians and the interaction was most lively. One of the Chinese delegates, Yu Tien Chou, later came to Jadavpur and spoke on the problems of translating from Bengali into Chinese and from Chinese into Bengali.

4 Earlier at JNU and at Kanpur

Earlier, in December 1983, JNU also organized a more modest affair, a seminar on French and CL, with participants from various parts of India and a few overseas from France. Yet earlier, in October, a seminar on the impact of Buddha on literature was held at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur under the joint auspices of its Department of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Indian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies, inaugurated by the Dalai Lama and directed by Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah and Dr S. Krishnamoorthy Aithal.

5 The Dhvanyaloka Seminars

And at his own Dhvanyaloka, the Literary Criterion Centre for English and the Indigenous Arts at Mysore, Professor Narasimhaiah had three seminars in 1983-84, on the place of landscape in literature, in April, on literature and protest, in July and "towards the formulation of a common poetic for Indian literatures today", in January, all of a true comparative nature. Some of the papers presented in these seminars have been already published in *The Literary Criterion* and

more are going to be published. His next seminar will be held in June 1984, on the first Indian novels. It is two decades now that Professor Narasimhaiah has been a staunch supporter of CL in India: we remember his participation at the seminar we had at Jadavpur in 1965 on "Yeats and India" and his friendship ever since.

6 *Comparative Indian Literature*

We mentioned last year the publication of the Malayalam translation of the first volume of *Comparative Indian Literature* by Kerala Sahitya Akademi. The translation of the second volume has been since published. And now, Macmillan India Limited, the publisher of the original English edition, has just released the first English volume. The second volume is expected in August-September. The credit goes mainly to Dr K.M. George, chief editor and the director of this project, for finishing this stupendous task and making available to us the first reference book of CIL.

7 *The Subramania Bharati Chair of CL*

Guru Nanak Dev University at Amritsar has founded a chair in CL, named after the Tamil poet Subramania Bharati. It is in a way in the spirit of CL in India that one of its northernmost universities should name its CL chair after a Southern poet. The chair is not going to organize any teaching now; its first task will be to bring out a journal, the *Bharati Journal of Comparative Literature*.

8 *CIL Fellowships*

Last year the Rabindra-Bhavana of Visva-Bharati where the Tagore archives are located, instituted a senior fellowship in CIL. The first appointment was given to Dr Bholabhai Patel of the School of Languages, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad. He has worked on the impact of Tagore on Gujarati writers. This year, the Sahitya Akademi, the national academy of letters, has also instituted ten research fellowships in CIL. One of the ex-students of the Jadavpur department, Veena Alase, has been given appointment to one of them.

9 *Our Contributors*

We are indebted to Rev Father Alphonse D'Souza, SJ, Provincial, Calcutta, of the Society of Jesus, for his permission to print Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the late Father Robert Antoine's unfinished book *The Technique of Oral Composition in the Rāmāyana*. Henry H. Remak is a doyen of CL in the true sense. One of the

principal theorists of the American school, he has been teaching at Indiana University for over three decades. E. San Juan, Jr. is from the Philippines and is an authority on Philippine literature and culture. He teaches English at the University of Connecticut. In his series on the Indian literary terminology, Sisir Kumar Das is going to write next on the dramatic terms. This year he gave the Sarat Memorial Lectures at Calcutta University on the limits of prose and verse. V. Sachithanandan is a senior teacher of English and CL at Madurai Kamaraj University. It has been primarily through his efforts that CL has found a place on the academic map of South India. Author of *Whitman and Bharati*, he has recently published *A Dictionary of Western Literary Terms* in Tamil. P. Marudanayagam also teaches at the Madurai department. An eminent English scholar of the country, R. K. Kaul has contributed to our journal before. His special area of interest is not drama alone but the European Enlightenment as well. K. Chellappan is a senior teacher of English at Bharathidasan University at Tiruchirappalli. He has worked on the tragic mode, particularly in Ilango and Shakespeare. Three years ago he organized a seminar on CL and translation. Rani Rema Devi is one of K. Chellappan's research students at Tiruchirappalli. Harish Trivedi teaches English at St Stephen's College, Delhi. He has been working on Premchand for some time now and has translated, among other things, Amrit Rai's life of Premchand. Shirshendu Chakrabarti teaches English at Jadavpur. He did his D.Phil. at Oxford on Swift. Swapan Majumdar is at present working on medieval Indian literature, particularly on bhakti and its route. Debiprasad Bhattacharyya is a senior teacher of CL at Jadavpur. To the many languages that he already has he is now adding another, Gujarati. Subir Ray Choudhuri has published a second edition of E.W. Madge's book on Derozio which he first edited some two decades ago. He is also writing Derozio's biography for the National Book Trust.

We are indebted to the CILA and the Department of Modern Indian Languages, University of Delhi to let us print Dr Harish Trivedi and Sri Swapan Majumdar's papers; and to Sri Swaraj Banerjee, Sri Rabindranath Das, Dr Pranabendu Dasgupta, Dr Nabaneeta Dev Sen and Sri Dilip Mukherjee for their help in the production of this number.